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A Case Study of Assessment in a High School Classroom: The Impact of Changes in Assessment on Curriculum, Instruction, Teachers, and Students

A DISSERTATION

Submitted by

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To my family
David, Debby, Tim, Matt, Anna, Jack, Rodney
to the students and my colleagues at Auburn Schools
and to Paul Putnam my co-teacher

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ABSTRACT

A Case Study of Assessment in a High School Classroom: The Impact of Changes in Assessment on Curriculum, Instruction, Teachers, and Students

This study examined the impact of changes in assessment on curriculum, instruction, teachers, and students. The study describes the complex, developmental process by which a particular course, teachers, and a class evolved, articulated goals and standards, and assessed their learning. My co-teacher and I used a variety of assessments: conferences, peer review, reflections, portfolios, group projects, and presentations in addition to traditional tests and quizzes. The methodology was a qualitative study by a teacher/researcher in a high school Humanities class. My findings were that new theories about knowledge and its acquisition necessitate changes in our practice. 1) An integral part of this change is the need to shift assessment toward coaching and feedback and away from ranking and grading. 2) Students *and* teachers need to openly converse and grapple with ideas to assess their learning and to solve problems with a variety of solutions. 3) Assessment must be ongoing for both teachers and students. A variety of standards including the Massachusetts' Curriculum Frameworks were used to help my co-teacher and me to assess the course. My recommendations are that further research is necessary to study the impact of change on students and teachers.

CHAPTER I

The Context of the Study

This study describes the evolution of an interdisciplinary course and its curriculum; it looks at the complex process by which a particular course, teachers, and a class collaboratively evolved standards and goals. As a teacher/researcher I assessed a Humanities class from within and without. I discovered that setting high standards and goals must be an ongoing, collaborative process of assessment. Daily we monitored and adjusted our curriculum and instruction to the needs of the students to provide a positive environment for growth. In a complex developmental process, my co-teacher and I collaborated as we tried new assessment methods. We evolved our assessments from paper and pencil tests of skills and knowledge to authentic assessment methods including portfolio/timelines, puppet shows, and conferences. As co-teachers we realized that to evaluate complex thinking, and student competencies, instead of skills and facts alone, required us to fine-tune our judgment and develop a common language both with one another and with our students. In this environment, the students were affected positively when they saw their efforts, not their ability or talent, had a direct bearing on their achievement. This study is divided into three major parts:

Introduction

Chapter I: The Context of the Study describes my earlier research with college students and my transition back to public school. Because I had taught in college for the seven years preceding the study, I discuss the expectations that I held for my college students and tutors in my English classes and in the Writing and Learning Center. I also summarize an earlier case study of my students' self-assessments as writers.

Finally, the chapter describes the beginning phases of the study as I developed my Guiding Questions and methods and began to co-teach in a high school Humanities classroom.

Chapter II: The History of Education Reform

The study took place in 1997, the mid-point of Education Reform in Massachusetts. This chapter describes the history of the national and statewide Education Reform Movements and their initiatives to bring about high standards and assessment reform. I look at the problems and the failures in other states to see if there are lessons to learn, and warnings to heed. I also look at Massachusetts' progress toward developing a statewide curriculum and assessment system.

The Findings

Chapter III Internal Assessments: This chapter describes the broad range of assessments that took place in the Humanities classroom and the process through which they evolved. Through a process, which I call collaborative assessment, two very different teachers developed curriculum and set goals and standards. Through experimentation, trial and error, and what I realized was a developmental process, these goals and standards became more complex and better articulated throughout the year. At the end of the chapter I describe the elaborate and often uncomfortable process of assessing two somewhat resistant students.

CHAPTER IV External Assessments

This chapter evaluates the course using external standards. After the course ends, Mr. Parsons and I assess the course's alignment with the goals and standards of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the Common Core of Learning and

consider the relationship of our goals and standards to those of the state, parents in Auburn, and other teachers in the community.

Chapter V: Student Self-Assessments

This chapter assesses the course from the perspective of the students. In their own words six students describe their misunderstandings, their reflections, the impact of assessment on their motivation, and their assessment of the course.

The Results and Implications of the Study

Chapter VI: Results and Implications

This chapter is a summary of the results of the study and its implications for future practice and study. I summarize the answers to the five Guiding Questions. I developed a chart that shows the evolution of the class from the perspective of knowledge, assessment, teacher epistemologies, and methodologies. In this chapter I recommend further studies about the effectiveness of collaborative assessment both within classrooms and among teachers setting standards and goals. I recognize the need for further studies of teacher evolution as they implement change. Finally, I recommend further studies that assess the effectiveness and impact of alternative methods of assessment on curriculum, teachers, students, and classroom dynamics.

I had left college teaching to become a director of curriculum and faculty development, the person responsible for bringing the changes mandated by Education Reform to a school district. In order to understand the ramifications and standards of statewide educational reform movement for myself in concrete terms, I taught and assessed a high school class, looking at it from within and from without. This yearlong study gave me the opportunity to work with teachers, students, and curriculum and to

learn about the district by being actively engaged with curriculum, teachers, and students.

In the next section I describe my previous studies and discuss my underlying goals for teaching. I describe a powerful study of a student's self-assessment and growth as writers.

> *This course has been an epiphany for me. I've learned so much about literature it's sickening! I learned about literature and life in your class, and I also learned about myself.*
>
> Ruth

Ruth's comment in her final self-assessment at the end of Composition and Literature epitomizes an unstated, perhaps idealistic goal which I hold for all my students. I want moments of truth, deep appreciation, a profound sense of change, or what some may call a transformation to occur in my classes.

Dani, an exchange student from Switzerland in the Auburn Humanities class, also expressed that sense of change:

> *I have to tell you that I don't really know why I chose to write a poem in my final paper. Actually, I've always been kind of afraid of poems, especially of writing poems. I don't know why, probably because I always feel [that I do] not fully understand them. Another possible reason is the style most poems are written in. I think if you have to say something, it is much easier to write it in a formal way. My poem is my first one ever!*

Dani had taken a chance and had learned something about himself as well. The

connections between internal change and learning had been the focus of my earlier research on students in my college freshmen composition and literature classes. When I left a two-year college to become Director of Curriculum and Faculty Development in a suburban K-12 public school district, I wanted to continue my study of student development.

However, the rules had changed dramatically in public schools in the seven years since I had left high school teaching. Schools were in the throes of understanding and adjusting to the Education Reform Movement in Massachusetts. Some schools had changed dramatically, others had not. However, a test with serious consequences was to be administered to all children in the year 2001. Assessment reform had become a key issue because of the Education Reform Movement. The test would be a measure of reading and writing and problem solving across the disciplines described from K-12 in The Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. The ideal classroom was described in The Common Core of Learning and competencies and goals for each of the seven disciplines were described in the Frameworks: English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Foreign Language, the Arts, and Health. The Common Chapters described "learning-centered" classrooms where teachers created "curriculum and *assessments*" [Italics added for emphasis.] that provided opportunities for "students to learn by doing, to learn by interacting, and to learn by reflecting" (1993, p. 6). I realized that I needed to understand the Frameworks, the Massachusetts Common Core of Learning, and those external assessments in order to effectively serve my community.

In my college classes I had been relatively free to develop my own course of study. The English Department required five major essays and a research paper of its

freshmen students. The department had no exit exams, and no required texts. However, we had collaborated on a scoring rubric for student compositions and often discussed students and their papers. I was expected to describe my expectations in a course policy and syllabus. I had evolved very explicit standards in my seven years of teaching college composition and had experimented with many kinds of assessments: portfolios, self-evaluations, peer editing, and presentations. I had developed descriptive scales and task analyses to support student growth. These scales showed students what they had done and what they needed to do to improve. Appendix A includes the syllabus for a twenty-day writing intensive course, its portfolio requirements, the grading standards, the standards and point scale for evaluating an essay, a model for a traditional argument essay, and the first reading assignment. This "Bridge English" course was a course required or recommended to some of the college's incoming freshmen because of their poor academic history.

In addition to teaching, I had also been the director of a writing and learning center where I had trained writing tutors to assist students in their writing and revision. I learned the value of collaboration and feedback as I worked with students and professors.

My Earlier Studies

I had conducted two studies before this, both of student writers. In the first semester-long study, I worked one-to-one with three first-year college students as a tutor. In the second yearlong, I studied my own students in their first year of college as they worked to become better readers and writers in my Composition I and Composition and Literature I classes. In the first, I had seen differences among my

three tutees which I then analyze using the classifications of Women's Ways of Knowing (Belenky 1986). I found one of my students was very close to Silence, the position when words seem ineffectual and the Knower feels powerless. The second was a Received Knower, a position when authorities have all of the right answers. A Received Knower often sees concepts in an either/or fashion. The Subjective Knower perceives that what she sees or believes is true. The Procedural Knower, the level which I was trying to encourage the Subjective Knower to move toward, uses logic and organization (distancing) or sometimes empathy (connections) to understand the world. The Constructed Knower uses all of the positions, authority, the self, logic, and empathy to make sense of the world. In addition to working with writing, I was consciously working to develop more articulate levels of voice, as Belenky et al. (1986) would call cognitive development.

Under the Surface

In my first study of writers, I worked with three college freshmen as a writing tutor. I realized that at each higher cognitive level, the conversation flowed more easily; the topics covered were broader and greater in number, and often connections were made among disparate disciplines or topics. Beth (1), whom I considered a Subjective Knower was easy and delightful to work with. She was open, funny, and often digressed. As a teacher I had to work to keep her on task; sometimes she did not follow through with the assignments. She disliked the rules and regulations of grammar and organization. The woman I thought of as a Received Knower, Joan (2), was somewhat more constrained, but Willa (3) was so close to non-verbal that our sessions were always exhausting. With Beth I had to keep her from too many personal flights and

note that grammar and spelling were important to her readers. With Joan, I had to avoid her need for me to be her authority and encourage her to think on her own. With Willa, I tried to meet her silence with space and silence so that she would fill in the gaps. All were successful that semester; Beth, who loved writing (not editing), had one of her essays, called " brilliant" by her professor and published in the school newspaper; Joan connected with her own voice while describing a former teacher who had thought she was intelligent and, after that, wrote more fluidly. Willa literally learned to listen to her own voice and used a tape recorder to become more fluent.

I saw the struggles that each of those women had with college as a struggle to get past the next boundary: whether it was the silence, authority, the subjective voice, or logic. Each struggle was not simply an objective task, but required change in the self, and required more than cognition. I saw it as a struggle that Belenky et al. (1986) described so well, the struggle for voice, to gain language and to use its power over themselves, their learning, and their world

What I Was Most Loathe to Find

In my next studies, I spent a year looking at my own classes. *What result in your research are you most loath to find?* I thought my class was both safe and stimulating. We did a considerable amount of talking, sharing, and writing. Students maintained a portfolio, wrote three reflective essays at the beginning, middle, and end of the courses to reflect on how they saw themselves as writers and readers, and they wrote and revised weekly reflective, response, narrative, or academic essays using models from other students and a rubric which assigned points for content, organization, mechanics, and format (Appendix A). I did not want to discover that my

students were not learning or growing, that I was not creating a good environment for growth.

When I talked to these students during interviews and read their reflective essays, I found again that far more than their writing skills were involved. Yoko, an international student from Japan, powerfully described the emotional and cognitive tasks of learning to write because of her cultural conflicts:

> The argument essay made me sick. I hate arguing. I think that's because I don't have my own opinion. As I told you before, we are not used to expressing our feelings, ideas, and thinking so even if I have some topics, which I want to argue, I have no clue how I could argue about it. And I also feel scared to argue about something because I am afraid that someone may become mad at my opinion.

We talked about these conflicts. Yoko had begun her argument with the thesis: *Japanese women want to act like American women.* When I told her that wasn't exactly an argument, she haggled for a while and added the tag: *but they shouldn't.* Her essay had argued the point, but by the end she wasn't so sure of her answer that Japanese women should never be like Americans, though she valued her traditions. We talked about finding good in both, and she ended that assignment by saying that she didn't really "understand the argument." She had wanted a definitive answer and had difficulty with ambiguity.

Cara was bouncy and spontaneous, always ready to work at writing. She seemed so positive and resilient on the outside. She insisted: "I'm not a good writer. I never thought I was a good writer" though the class gave her examples of what was

good about her writing, and she held the entire class spellbound in her description of her struggle with the facial paralysis of Bell's Palsy.

As I began to interview this student and others, I was surprised at the disparity between what I thought had happened in my class and what had really happened. The confrontation with my own belief system changed me profoundly. Cara felt unchanged:

> None of my problems changed since high school. I still always changed my tenses. I go from past to present. I go all over the place. My commas. I put in commas where you don't need commas. Did you notice? I don't know.

Ironically, most of the marks on the high school paper that she had saved and brought to college were commas that were missing, not commas that she added unnecessarily. Noted on her paper were two positive comments and 30 "errors." Cara's memories of her "flaws" were somewhat inaccurate. She had missing commas, not commas all over the place. She had made a tense shift, but only one. Perhaps she did not look past the first page. Cara had received a good grade from the "hardest teacher" she had ever had, but it did not change her view of herself as a writer. Perhaps the negative comments outweighed the A and the positive comment about her graphic writing.

By the end of the year, Cara was beginning to see herself as someone who did not have to "sweat" writing in college. Perhaps the ability to do a particular task well and incorporate that sense of competence into one's identity takes a long time.

Confidence in writing was a part of a far greater transformation in this energetic student who, because she was a dancer, had to struggle with physical and emotional

issues along with academic ones. Her sense that she was only artistic, her negative image of her body, and with what she saw as poor writing had spoken more loudly than an A paper or my words.

Emotion and Learning: "I Feel a Little Bit Bigger Than Before"

In these two studies, I had discovered that changes in writing also entailed changes in epistemology and in one's sense of self. Students helped me to see that writing and reading could result in major changes in their ways of seeing the world and themselves. I saw that sometimes learning triggers anxieties in areas that we as teachers are not necessarily aware. When we leave the safe haven of what we know to create a new paper or to read a challenging story, we are taking risks. I had no idea that a student's anxiety about writing could trigger other deep anxieties concerning identity, family, and cultural issues.

A Curriculum that Challenges and Supports

I saw that both anxiety and safety were part of learning. I started to call these changes "boundary crossings" because students had entered new territory of themselves as writers. The course had tried to lead students to move beyond their own boundaries into an expanded sense of the complexity of the world.

Moffet (1990) calls summary writing, the typical high school report, as Transactional Writing. Belenky et al. (1986) might describe these writers as Received Knowers, people whose knowledge (or writing) is based only on experts' words. I asked students (1) to cross the boundary of Silence by talking and writing reflections, (2) to cross from the Received stance by writing arguments, (3) to cross from the Subjective by empathizing (4) to cross toward Procedural through logic, and to (5)

construct their own theory by writing papers which incorporated all stances: reading, reflection, argument, empathy, and logic. I used Belenky et al.'s categories to evaluate the level of thinking in a paper, and to help me (and the student) determine what they might do next to broaden the kinds of thinking in a paper. This study helped me to further refine these ideas and see these categories without privileging the "higher" developmental levels.

Using this classification, if a student writes only summaries of others' ideas, by suggesting a response paper, a subjective response, a teacher can consciously ask students to see expand their view. I had done this with my tutees in the Learning Center. To move the student, as I had tried with Beth and Yoko, to use the logic of Procedural Knowledge, the student could be asked to develop an argument. In a later draft or paper the student might be asked to consider situations in which their points might be related to their own reality, again consciously prodding a student toward Connected Knowing.

I have used Women's Ways of Knowing's (Belenky et al., 1986) categories to assist students to look at their writing. I look at the categories as lenses, circles within circles, and ways of knowing. They are not necessarily separate at all, nor static; they interact with one another. The following is a table that I adapted for writing.

Classifications from Women's Ways of Knowing	**What it looks like in writing**	**What you see, read, or write about**
Received Knowledge (Their story)	• Summary • External description • Quote	Accurate summary. Objective observation. Direct quotes Writers' agendas or contexts are not yet analyzed.
Subjective Knowledge	• How you feel about someone or	Gut response What you see as real sometimes

(emotions, first impressions, likes, dislikes, prejudices)	something	before you begin to analyze. I like/don't like. I agree/disagree.
Procedural Knowledge Separate (distancing) Connected (empathetic)	• Analysis, logic, argument, comparison, contrast • metaphor • Empathy	Look at objective and subjective responses and analyze, compare, contrast, use metaphors. Use other information or theories to understand.
Constructed Knowledge (Your story or theory. All of the other ways of knowing are important parts of this whole)	• New (your) way of putting all three of the other stages together. This kind of writing is clearly your voice.	Consciously use all of the distancing and empathizing methods listed above to put your story together

I found these categories useful ways of describing different kinds of communication. The anxieties caused by change, by moving from Received Knowing to Subjective Knowing, for example, cause disequilibrium, "turning points in individual lives." Thus, learning cannot be all safety; growth brings along with it anxiety which can have positive, negative, or neutral results (Bee, 1996, p. 495). As teachers if we support students' small steps, perhaps we are also partially supporting larger transformations. As Yoko said, most succinctly:

> After I wrote the paper, I felt like it's fun to argue about something even if my opinion was not right. This essay makes me a *little bit bigger than before*." [Italics added for emphasis.]

In 1997 as I walked into the Humanities classroom, I brought these experiences and preconceptions with me. I felt learning was part of making personal sense of the world, a philosophy sometimes called constructivism. Students, instead of being inactive recipients of knowledge, become agents in making meaning. Knowledge is

constructed from making connections between past knowledge and the environment. We learn through an organic, not a linear process, through organizing and invention in a social environment, through reading, writing, and talking, not through the accumulation of information. Reflection is a major component of learning. Often learning takes place in an attempt to resolve cognitive conflict (Jonassen, 1992). Reflection, connection, dissonance, active engagement, and conversation were all essential parts of what I considered a positive learning environment in my classes. I also felt that students needed to feel a balance between being challenged and being safe so that they would take chances that might not end with perfect results. I had seen the benefit of feedback from me, their peers, or tutors, rather than correction.

Assessment of a Course, Students, and Teachers

I realized that there were many connections between my earlier research and my new study. I would continue to look at the individual student and his or her self-assessment of growth, but I would expand this view to assess the course itself. As I entered the Humanities classroom, I realized that my task of assessing a classroom from a variety of perspectives would be formidable. I decided to take this study to the next logical step beyond one class, one teacher, and language arts into two classes, four teachers, and a course that combines the arts and the language arts. In addition, because of the external pressures of Education Reform and the concerns of parents, I included their perspectives as well, but I wanted to maintain a deep respect for the complex world of the individual student.

The Humanities Course at Auburn High School

The Humanities course is open to all juniors and seniors as both an English and an Arts course. It had two sections, each taught by a Fine Arts and an English teacher,

all four of whom were teaching the course for the first time. There were twenty- five juniors or seniors in each class. The following is the course description in the 1996-97 Auburn High School Handbook of Studies:

> A course which provides the student with opportunities to investigate art, music and history in conjunction with works of literature and poetry. This course develops human creativity and risk-taking skills as well as introducing the way humans learn and remember. The student will delve into the literature and lives of common man from early Greece, the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and the Nineteenth Century and compare concepts from the prior age to its Twentieth Century counterparts. The course involves reading, writing of reflections, essays, and poetry, as well as dramatic presentations, music performances, and art projects (p. 15).

As I read the course description I realized it did not focus on the diversity of human kind which I might have guessed from its title. Instead, it was a survey of Western arts, literature, and music with a deliberate focus on the "common man" rather than on both genders. Literature and Art would be my responsibilities in the class. My co-teacher was responsible for the music. The course had no proscribed text or syllabus. The literature texts, music recordings, and art texts were available from both the English and Fine Arts Departments. The only requirement was that the students complete a formal research paper, but otherwise there were no defined outcomes or curriculum for the course. It is simply described as a junior or senior elective appropriate for college-bound students. Each of the two sections in 1996-97 had different readings and activities.

The Teaching Teams

My co-teacher had been an elementary voice teacher who was teaching at a high school level and in an academic course for the first time. He was in his third year of teaching and although well versed in voice and music, he did not have a century by century perspective on music or the arts. Nor did he like teaching directly; he preferred facilitating groups. I entered the course after he had taught alone for a month. He was quiet and gentle and the students were already settled in for a relaxed, slow-paced year. When I looked at the first assignments he had given back, I could see that coming from an elementary environment allowed him to be comfortable with assignments that were not purely reading and writing. He had asked the students to illustrate three periods of gardens: a 16th century formal garden with its statuary, fountains, and mazes, an 18th century Classical, symmetrical, formal and balanced, and a Romantic or "picturesque" with its attempt to echo nature. His comments had been positive and appropriate. However, the students had not done any serious writing. As we assigned the first writing assignment, I could sense that students saw me as an "authority" over this young man. I was older, an administrator, and a former college teacher. Being a woman who might challenge the authority of a man added a further dimension of complexity to my presence. I wanted to raise the standards and develop more challenging assignments, but I did not want to undermine the authority of another teacher or to create tension in the class.

The students affectionately called my co-teacher Mr. P^2 since his department head, Mr. Palmetto, was also a Mr. P. He was as new to Auburn Public Schools as I. The other team was also composed of an English and a music teacher. The English

teacher, Miss Riley, had been in the system for three years; the music teacher, Mr. Palmetto, the Interim Head of the Music Department, had taught in Auburn for 12 years.

The Students

Mr. Prouty the English Department Head told me that he recommended the course to creative students, to students who loved the arts, to students who were ready for a challenge, or those who liked learning in different ways. Learning differences and making personal connections with their learning had been a part of the curriculum for the last five years, according to Mrs. Johnson, a former teacher of Humanities. Students had studied their own learning styles and had made connections between their ways of understanding the world and the different eras and artists studied. Mr. Palmetto said that a diversity of students, some "artsy," some very good students, and some with learning needs, were referred to the class. This was because the last team of teachers had included two very artistic and very supportive teachers including the Director of Special Education, who had also been an English teacher in Auburn, and the Art Supervisor.

The High School Handbook describes the curriculum as comprehensive. There is no tracking system, although teachers often guide students to the courses that they feel are more appropriate and junior and senior English electives are designated either "recommended for both college and non-college bound student" or recommended specifically for the "college-bound" (1996-7, p. 4). Humanities is recommended for only college-bound students. Although some in the class did not continue to college immediately after graduation, those who did not said that they would in a year.

The Five Guiding Questions

This study began with the following five questions:

1. What kinds of assessments take place in this course?
2. What relationships does this course have to the needs, goals, and standards of students, parents, teachers, and administrators in the Auburn system?
3. How does this course align with the assessment standards and curriculum standards of the Massachusetts Frameworks and national standards?
4. How can the methods of assessment be improved within this course?
5. What are the implications for courses in related disciplines?

I was assessing the course through multiple lenses from within and outside of the class, from the perspectives of students, teachers, the nation, the state, parents, English teachers, art teachers, and the district.

Research Methods

I chose to do teacher research mainly because I love the classroom and because I wanted to experience what the changes and expectations felt like in a class. I hoped the results could transfer to everyday practice (Riley et al., 1993, p.189). This study of the Humanities class and assessment is a naturalistic study using quantitative data when it is appropriate. The sample includes junior and senior students from one class in Humanities, four present teachers, one past teacher, the head of the English Department, and parents of the students in the classes. Field notes from observations, transcriptions of taped interviews, samples of assignments and student work, weekly memos, and surveys were used as data. Although the questions stated serve as the focal points, as the study continued, through field notes and reflective memos (Bogdan and

Biklan, 1992), further patterns and questions emerged from the data.

I began to see assessments in a different way. I saw that conferences were assessments, and my early morning planning sessions with my co-teacher were assessments as were the discussions I had with Mr. Prouty. Both my co-teacher and students resisted changes in assessments. In addition, wherever I looked, at curriculum guides, at the Frameworks, at national standards, I had difficulty finding concrete examples of standards, though there were many broadly defined goals. As I began to tape and transcribe, I realized that I wanted to record the friendly tension between my co teacher and me; we differed so in style, age, and background. Also, I became concerned because the students were less responsive than students had been in classes that I taught on my own.

I began collecting data at the end of the third quarter when I recorded a discussion as my co-teacher and I read through and assessed third quarter exams and assigned grades. As the final quarter began, I continued to tape our discussions as we developed assignments and assessed them. I also taped and transcribed conferences with students as they assessed their grades and set goals for the fourth quarter. Data were collected from parents, administrators, and former teachers through taped discussions and questionnaires. In 1996-96 Auburn High School was in the second year of a self-assessment in preparation for the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) ten-year evaluation in October 1997. That data also served as a resource. Student tests, self-assessments, portfolios, performances, and presentations were collected and photocopied, or audio- or videotaped. A final discussion among all of the teachers as they assessed the courses was taped. The final recording took place

when Mr. Parsons and I evaluated the final exams for the juniors and gave their quarterly and final grades.

Data were coded on the basis of categories that emerged from the data and with the categories from the initial questions. The kinds of assessments, their relationships to the needs, goals and standards of the stakeholders, the course's alignment with the Massachusetts Frameworks, improvements in assessments, and the implications of the findings for other disciplines were major categories. The data were reviewed weekly and evaluated in the light of the focusing questions in analytical memos, discussions with key informants, concept mapping, and further research. After the course had ended, I coded the data into categories based on the initial questions and categories that had emerged as I tried to look at assessment from different perspectives.

I used computer searches to code using numbered lines for transcriptions, memos, and other data, using the index function of Microsoft Word, and finally physically cut, pasted, and sorted sentences, paragraphs and pages into coded manila folders (Bogdan & Bilken, 1992, pp. 153-183). I analyzed category by category and organized the findings onto an evolving grid that included all categories, teachers, interviewees, and students. The matrix outlines the responses to the initial questions and others that may have emerged during the study (Appendix B).

Participant names have been changed to protect their identity. All of the students and interviewees were informed whenever I was taping. They gave permission to use their words. The Matrix of Data Collections Appendix B lists the student assessments, the dates, and all activities assessed in each.

The Impact of Education Reform on a Specific Course

I used the Massachusetts Common Core of Learning, part of the state's reform initiative, to evaluate assessment. It calls for a change in state-wide assessment with the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System tests and a broadening in the types of local assessment to include portfolios, performances, and to meet specific state-wide standards specified in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (Common Core of Learning, 1993). The Common Core of Learning specifically states:

> Assessment is both a process and a tool to improve instruction and enhance student learning (1993, p. 6).

I felt that in my college classes and at the learning center my tutors and I had used conferences, and alternative methods of assessment to enhance student learning. Although these methods had seemed good for me, I wondered how these new approaches would be received. I needed to see if changing assessment was a positive change and to what degree. Then in my role as administrator I could work with the teachers, students, and parents to effect those changes in methodology, philosophy, and values that improved learning.

> Assessment reform is viewed as a means of setting more appropriate targets for students, focusing staff development efforts for teachers, encouraging curriculum reform, and improving instruction and instructional materials (Darling-Hammond & Wise, 1985, as cited by Bond, p. 1)

These changes in assessment reflected the change to a learning-centered classroom in which students are actively engaged in constructing their own understanding. In this model, students no longer to sit passively in rows, but work in groups discussing and evaluating together to solve problems that often have many

answers. This change required more than a change in textbooks or methodology. The school had refused to change to block scheduling and the union was protesting its "academic freedom" not to change methods from the lecture/textbook/objective test methodology. After this study ended, the Department of Education rejected the union's request. The vision for change as defined in The Common Core of Learning described teacher-centered classrooms where students would *"learn by doing... by interacting, and...by reflecting" (1993, p.6).*

Learning-Centered Classrooms are places where:

1. All students can learn challenging content and process skills;
2. Students use a variety of strategies and approaches to problem-solving
3. Students explore how knowledge has purpose and meaning in their lives;
4. Curriculum points to the connections within and across disciplines because real world tasks require the ability to integrate knowledge and synthesize information;
5. Assessment is both a process and a tool to improve instruction and enhance student learning;
6. Students learn effectively from teachers who model the habits of life-long learners.

As I taught I developed a table (Appendix C), reflecting my initial way of looking at traditional and learning-centered teaching, that is, as two mutually exclusive extremes of thought, one desirable and at a higher stage (learning-centered), the other not so desirable. I felt the opposition to change in the teacher's room when teachers dismissed the Frameworks as "another fad." As I began to see change, this grid, these

mutually exclusive positions, then evolved into two poles along a developmental continuum. Finally, I realized that these positions were not mutually exclusive, but co-existed and were useful at different stages of learning. I developed a more comprehensive grid in the final stages of the study. For a full discussion of this grid, see Chapter VI.

Both in the corridors and through the table, I realized that I was looking at far more than a methodological change. Even the language of assessment had changed--from words that imply distance and judgment (rank)--to words that describe students at the center of the process (journey), from teacher- or knowledge-centered (errors, mistakes) to student-learning-centered (what to do next).

The change in language reflected a shift in values from a scientific, objective, distanced relationship between learning, teacher, and student (objective, knowledge as separate entities, normal curves, standardized, mastery learning) to a more collaborative one in a social environment. In the former the teacher stands above the student in a hierarchical relationship, as the one who knows the answers, and who judges the students' growth. In this model, students are passive and expected to be quiet. Learning and the text are linear going from simple to complex. In the latter, the teacher is a facilitator, a coach, and the students are actively making sense of a world in which reality (authenticity) and connectedness (interdisciplinary, theme based), complex, higher order thinking skills (reflectiveness, performances) and talk (conferences) are essential. Knowledge is not information out there, but must be assimilated actively by learners making meaning through past knowledge and social interaction. It was my intention to begin to shift the balance in the direction of a learning-centered approach in

the Humanities class. At the same time, I was beginning to work on making the shift throughout the district. However, I went slowly, realizing from my former studies that change is fraught with anxiety. The changes are described in Chapters III and VI.

Resistance to change comes from all quarters; people want to hold on to the ways things have been done. In assessments, parents, colleges, and businesses favor the present A, B, C, grading methods and "love...objective measurements" (Caine et al., 1997, p. 72).

Negotiating Entry

Mr. Prouty said that the teachers had left many materials and that the course, because it was so large in scope, could be shaped in many ways. I was delighted with the idea of working with a teacher as a peer. I had taught high school English for ten years and college English for 7, so I gladly accepted. However, I did not begin to teach, except for four Fridays, until October. Mr. Parsons and I talked on the phone and met before the first four Friday classes to try to organize the class. I also met with the other two teachers and the former two teachers to discuss the course. Mr. Parsons and I used many of the materials from prior years during the first quarter and then began to develop our own units, as we adjusted to an extremely quiet class. We gave students options to present to us privately instead of at the front of the class or to audio- or videotape their presentations. By the time that I began collecting data at the end of third quarter, I had been team teaching the course for two quarters.

Assessment Reform in a Classroom

As I began to teach the course, I wondered if there were standards by which we could assess our course and our students. I had my own, but how would they match the

external measurements of the statewide tests? I studied national, state, and local documents for clearly defined goals and levels of achievement. Although each document espoused the belief in "high standards," none defined them in practical terms. As my co-teacher, the students, and I developed our class culture, we began to develop a common sense of standards and a common language which evolved unit by unit into incrementally more challenging goals. My co-teacher and I were learners in that classroom, going through the same teaching, learning, reflecting and assessing cycle as our students.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION REFORM

The study took place in 1997, the mid-point of Education Reform in Massachusetts. This chapter describes the history of the national and statewide Education Reform Movements and their initiatives to bring about high standards and assessment reform. I look at the problems and the failures in other states to see if there are lessons that I can learn from them. I also look at Massachusetts' progress toward developing a statewide curriculum and assessment system.

Assessment Reform

For seventy-five years educators have assumed that objective, norm-based testing was the most appropriate and reliable means of arriving at an evaluation of student performance. Yet, recent research has revealed that grading on the curve has negative results since "most students are forced to be losers [and] the fairness and equity of grading on the curve is a myth" (Guskey, 1996, p. 19). Grades based on a normal curve can be used to rank students but those numbers or percentiles do not assess student progress or improve learning. Grades and numbers do not improve student achievement although oral and written feedback do. However, the value of the new alternative tests in improving student performance is still unproved.

Recent researchers have recognized the complexity of the process of evaluation and have studied the conflict felt by individual teachers as they weigh external standards, their own vision of teaching, and the individual student's needs (Ryan, 1997). Some research indicates that competition and standardized achievement tests may be obstacles in the way of raising curriculum standards (Miller, 1997).

Researchers and the educators who created the Massachusetts Frameworks have recognized that the change from a teacher-centered to a learning-centered curriculum will necessitate assessment changes. For these changes to take place within a community, teachers, students, parents, and administrators will need to become involved in the process (Marzano, 1996; Massachusetts Common Core of Learning, 1993; Wiggins, 1996, 1996-1997). Although I agreed with many of the original ideals of Education Reform in Massachusetts, I was not sure what they meant in practice.

For example, if a student's achievement in reading is described as a grade level from a standardized test, it does little to explain the cause, or for the teacher to determine the next step. Norm-based tests have been criticized by education reformers because objective tests do not test complex thinking but are limited to skills and facts. The reading score would have been the result of a student's ability to answer multiple choice questions. It would not have assessed whether or not a student could describe a character or connect the ideas to real life. If educators use only objective tests to evaluate students or curriculum, then curriculum and student achievement is limited to what they can test and the way they could test it. In addition, these tests, have been accused of gender, racial, and social class bias (Supovitz, 1997, 475-7). Alternative assessments have been used in many states to drive instruction change, yet their value is still in question. Reformers believe that American education focuses too much on facts and skills. They reasoned that if assessments were more complex, then the emphasis in the classroom would shift toward more complex thinking. Grant Wiggins, an assessment researcher, has said: "Assessment is the Trojan horse of school reform" (quoted by Sapier, 1997, 459).

Within the classroom alternative assessments are based on samples of student work or performances, debates, skits, experiments, portfolios, and projects, which are designed to show complex thinking skills. Authentic assessment, which sometimes extends over a long period of time, is often considered a learning experience. Performance assessments that are based on student performances or products are not necessarily part of the class, for example in national or statewide tests. (Supovitz, 1997, 474). Alternative assessments integrate assessment into the learning and teaching cycle. For example, with a portfolio students write and revise and select pieces to go into their portfolio. Instead of the traditional end-of-unit test or nationally standardized tests that are hidden from view, in alternative assessments the ideal is that expectations are explicit from the beginning of the assessment process. Students become involved in the process; assessment shifts its emphasis from testing to feedback.

The National Education Reform Movement

The present national movement for Education Reform has focused on economic competition in an international market. The National Commission on Excellence in Education declared in A Nation at Risk in 1983 that the mediocre education of the United States placed the American economy in jeopardy. In a study by Murane and Levy (cited by Steinberg, 1997) the authors found that the skills needed for success in business have changed but our schools have changed little to address them. Basic skills, as defined by success in hiring, training and promotion in five American businesses, are not those held for the last 100 years in the United States whose manufacturing model of the single teacher and large class was analogous to the foreman and his workers. Business demands more now. The New Basic Skills begin with the traditional necessity of reading and doing mathematics on a ninth grade level, but also

include the ability to solve "semistructured problems", to work in groups, to communicate effectively orally and in writing, and to use personal computers. The authors point out that nearly half of all students do not have even basic ninth grade reading and mathematics skills (as cited in Steinberg, 1997, p. 6). Although equity of educational opportunity was also part of the initial international focus, the language associated with education originates from business: quality, systemic change, benchmarks, accountability, or results-based outcomes, for example. Education's responsibility for developing competent workers who can compete in the twenty-first century and accountability, both fiscal and in student performance, are the basic tenets of the national movement (Baker, 1997, November and Spring; Gusky, 1996; McDonnell, 1997; Marzano et al., 1996; Wiggins, 1996; Wolf, 1997). Equity considerations have not played a major role in the development of assessments. George Madaus cautions that our Western belief in the "religion of progress" and our belief in the technology of alternative assessments may blind us to the fact that we cannot "assess our way out of our educational problems" (1994, p. 3). To remedy underachievement, Madaus asserts educators must also include health, nutrition, living conditions, teacher training, and the conditions of specific schools.

The national movement began to define quality and standards by attempting to develop a national curriculum that would be assessed by a national assessment test that included authentic assessment questions. For ten years the federal Department of Education worked with national educational groups like the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics to develop national standards and national tests. However, because of many political and educational issues, for example, the controversial Social

Studies Curriculum, the federal government then gave the responsibility for standards to the states. In the United States, unlike many international countries, the federal government provides funding, but has little impact on the operation of education systems (Baker, 1997, p. 1). Historically the local community has been primarily responsible for the day to day decisions of the school. Because the states have taken an increased financial role in local education, they have become more assertive in calling for change on the local level.

On March 31, 1994, the Goals 2000: Educate America Act was signed into law, and the federal government pledged to form a new and supportive partnership with states and communities in an effort to improve student academic achievement across the nation. Each state was to develop comprehensive strategies for helping all students reach those standards -- by upgrading assessments and curriculum to reflect the standards, improving the quality of teaching, expanding the use of technology, strengthening accountability for teaching and learning, promoting more flexibility and choice within the public school system, and building strong partnerships among schools and families, employers, and others in the community. Finally, each state was asked to develop its improvement strategies with broad-based, grassroots involvement. The committee stated the belief that "students and schools are not measuring up to the high standards required to maintain a competitive economy and a strong democracy" (Goals 2000, 1996).

Goals 2000 states that the new standards must be "challenging" and assessments "rigorous." The Committee stated that: "Challenging academic standards will need to be clear and understandable for all school districts." Similarly, the development of new

assessments that measure the performance of every child against high standards presents its own set of costs and complexities to adequately assess all students, including those who may need testing accommodations, such as those with disabilities or limited English" (Goals 2000). However, the new standards, the linchpin of the assessment reform movement, were not defined clearly in any document.

Quality Counts: A Report Card on the Condition of Public Education in the 50 States published in the spring of 1997, was the first annual report on the state of education in the United States. Its first sentence is memorable: "The public schools in the 50 states are riddled with excellence but rife with mediocrity" (1997, p. 3). This national report card on education gave the country a B in the area of standards and assessment, but "more for effort than results" (1997, p. 3) since the standards were still in the "planning stages" and have not yet become a part of the classroom. In addition, the study concluded that teachers were not yet prepared to teach the standards, nor were the states ready as yet to assess student progress. As I read this report card, I realized that others were having as much difficulty as I was defining what was to be assessed and by what standards.

Seven years after Goals 2000, the editors of Quality Counts described the effects of high standards based on national tests of student achievement as "discouraging" (p. 3). The editors of Quality Counts recognized that real reform would take more time. Even more discouraging is their prediction that in assessment the result of reform will likely be a "patchwork of standards that vary from state to state—and even from district to district" (p. 32). Six states have not tried to develop their own assessment measures but are using norm-referenced standardized tests.

On the positive side, Ronald Wolk, president and publisher of Education Week and Quality Counts, points out that the Education Reform movement has been proven through the national tests that higher student achievement can be accomplished "when educators share a high sense of mission and purpose...People who network and talk to each other and share educational goals can make an enormous difference" (1997, p. 2). However, he continues:

> Even the best of states don't even have half of their fourth graders reading at a proficient level. Even fewer had a proficient level in math at the eighth grade. One of our most prominent findings is that no school, and no state in the union, can really be proud of the success in its educational system (1997, p. 2).

Most states, excluding only two, Iowa and Wyoming, have begun to develop new assessments and curriculum frameworks (1997, p. 34). Most states, including Massachusetts, are still defining their standards.

Some critics voice their concern about reform because both federal and state mandated movements are top down and also because the major focus seems to be on employability and international competition (Baker, 1997, November, p. 2). In addition change requires time, money, and energy. Critics like Baker caution that these more complex and demanding performance based tests will be a major change in the United States where standardized testing and the normal curve have been used to define student achievement for 75 years. In addition, higher standards cost more money because they require the new performance based assessments. Because performance-based assessment tests require essay responses to complex questions, and because they

are judged by people using rubrics which describe the difference in levels of attainment, their results are not as reliable as standardized tests. In addition, all of these national and statewide tests have no history and are being developed as changes in the classrooms are taking place. These tests also change the way that learning and the learner are defined. In an objective test, knowledge is tested; students must have a correct answer. In contrast, these new tests examine problem solving and communication skills. Some questions may have many right answers, a profound change from standardized objective tests. Even more problematical is that the standards are not clearly defined. The editors of Quality Counts recognized that states were "on their way" to develop tests, but that the

> standards have not found their way into classrooms. Teachers by and large are not prepared to teach to them. We don't know how rigorous they are. The tests aren't yet in place to measure student progress....Maine has the best score in the nation on the 1994 NAEP 4th grade reading test and 59% of its 4th graders could not read at a proficient level" (1997, p. 3).

Even when there is a consensus that change is needed and everyone is working together to bring it about, issues and problems often threaten and impede change. Muncey and McQuillan, studying the Coalition of Essential Schools found that the "structure, dominant pedagogy, and disciplinary divisions of American secondary schools have remained relatively unchanged for nearly 100 years" (as cited in Byrnes, 1997, p. 151). Teachers have resisted change system for a long time.

A major problem of effecting change is maintaining momentum. Baker says

that the dilemma about bringing change in assessment, standards, and practice for the states is the need to continue to move "rapidly enough to be regarded as an active directed entity" (1997, p. 16), but at the same time to bring about profound changes in American education, changing the system from a traditional one to a constructivist one. There have been many failures among the states, for a variety of causes. I wondered if there were lessons to be learned from other states and was surprised that other states that had moved beyond Massachusetts had given up their statewide initiatives for "higher standards" at least through statewide assessments. California, Vermont, North Carolina, Kentucky, and Arizona have disbanded their testing programs. Arizona, for example, has abandoned its performance-based tests. According to Smith's study in Arizona, teachers had difficulty changing from skills to constructivism (1997, p. 103). Traditional skill and drill methodologies were entrenched. For example, elementary teachers continued to drill students on their math facts, addition, subtraction, and multiplication tables, but resisted having students work to discover multiple methods for answering questions, estimate answers, or answer problems such as: what is the probability of having a blue M&M? In addition, in Arizona, tests had low reliabilities, the cost for professional development was very high and difficult to fund politically, and the time and resources needed to effect change and increase teacher or system "capacity" were not sufficient (Smith, 1997, p. 104). California, Kentucky, and North Carolina's problems also were based on the "traditional implementation constraints of short time lines, limited resources, and the need to communicate complicated, new routines down through the governmental system to street-level bureaucrats in local schools and classrooms" (McDonnell, 1997, p. 65).

In Arizona, the central assessment conflicts were both political and technical. Political interests felt the purpose of education reform was to assess the effectiveness of teachers and the professional educators. Teachers and administrators, on the other hand, felt that politicians lacked the expertise to evaluate the complexity of the learning process. In Arizona, the conflict was further exacerbated by the dispute between the technical testing experts who called for accountability, an external evaluation of effectiveness, while the teachers wanted the test to be useful as an internal tool to guide instruction. Teachers did not want a test that assessed teachers, districts, and students as its primary purpose. They wanted the tests to support ongoing learning experience for teachers and students in a safe environment in which teachers coached and learned. The Arizona tests created an environment in which teachers might be fired, districts sanctioned, and students fail to graduate (Baker, 1997, p. 105; Smith et al., 1997, pp. 82-83). "Fiscal and time constraints...meant that the original assessment plans had to be scaled back, with the emphasis placed on the state accountability portion of the assessment at the expense of continuous, classroom-based assessment" (Baker, Spring 1997, p. 5). Neither Kentucky nor Arizona allocated resources for professional development. Changing the tests was not sufficient to change practice.

Massachusetts and the Education Reform Act of 1993

Massachusetts is also in the middle of a heated political debate about testing. Although the state initially administered the Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) tests to assess schools and districts, but not individual students, these tests were judged ineffective in providing sufficient incentives for districts to change. "High stakes" consequences to teachers, students, and districts were added along with

more proscribed, and therefore more testable, curricula with the Massachusetts Curriculum Assessment System (MCAS) tests. These tests are still being written and are in the initial testing phases. The high stakes consequences will begin in the year 2001, although results from the spring 1998 MCAS tryouts will be released in 1998 for both individual students and schools. For the districts, the highest stake is that the Education Reform moneys, funded until the year 2001 will be eliminated unless schools and students show progress in the state tests. The levels have been a source of controversy with the third level, Deficient, causing great concern for educators because of the damage that it would do to students taking the test. The Board of Education defended its use and maintained that parents, students, and communities needed to face the fact that their students were not performing to high standards. In February 1998, the Massachusetts Board of Education changed the third category so that from highest to lowest the categories are: Advanced, Proficient, Needs Improvement, and Failure. In February 1998, two months before the first administration of the tests in English, Mathematics, and Science/Technology, the state released sample questions. However, there are no sample answers on any performance level, and there is not clear definition of what a student will be able to do on an open-ended question to attain a particular rating.

Linda Darling-Hammond asserts that the Education Reform movement has two very different motives driving it. Sometimes reformers work in tandem and sometimes they work against one another:

> One theory focuses on tightening controls: more courses, more tests, more directive curriculum, more standards enforced by more rewards and more

sanctions. These reformers would improve education by developing more tests and tying funds to schools and test scores.

A second theory attends more to the qualifications and capacities of teachers and to developing schools through changes in teacher education, licensing and certification processes...professional development schools, efforts to decentralize school decision making while infusing knowledge, changing local assessment practices, and developing networks among teachers and schools (1992, p. 22).

Massachusetts MEAPs tests and the initial curriculum frameworks were developed with the latter grassroots, professional development, and community involvement, but change was too slow for the Chancellor of Education, John Silber, and his newly-appointed Board of Education. The curriculum frameworks developed later during John Silber's tenure have moved away from a conceptual statewide framework for curriculum to a more content-specific, top-down educational system. The expectations, according to Silber and the board, are that 50% of the students will fail the tests. However, these tests are still being created, have never been piloted, and standards of achievement have never been developed. According to the Board of Education, the students will be ranked from highest to lowest and then the board will decide at which point to divide students into the four categories. Thus, there are no standards. The collegial, collaborative, and grassroots beginnings have been replaced with a prediction of failure for the Massachusetts school districts. In addition, the Department of Education's newly appointed conservative board has been accused by many including John C. Rennie, chairman of the Business Alliance for Education, that

its "tone has been very insulting to educators." He asserts that Silber's changes in the direction of Massachusetts' reform have caused confusion and dissension among administrators and teachers (1997, p. 136).

These different points of view, according to Linda Ann Bond, director of assessment for NCREL, represent two poles of a continuum, which she labels the constructivist/instructional and the measurement/technical. She argues that both are important but that the purpose of the test determines which must take precedence. The former is paramount when the assessment is to be used for local purposes and validity is more important; the latter with large-scale assessments when reliability is more important (Bond, 1997, p. 3). The technologists have won the battle in Massachusetts, which means that measurement is to determine a grade or a label for students and districts, not to improve the instruction of students.

According to the "Nation's Report Card" in Quality Counts, Massachusetts has "some of the best schools in the United States, but also some of the worst." Although the editors call Education Reform in Massachusetts "promising", they state it is "threatened by tax-limitation law, politics, and lack of public commitment" (1997, p. 131). Although Massachusetts is in the top tier of student performance and of per-capita income (more than 175,000 based on total personal income per public school student) (1997, p. 55), its per pupil expenditures ($5675) are much lower (between $1,025-2400 less) than the other high performing industrialized states. Approximately a third of the students were ranked proficient, basic and below basic (36, 33,31) in fourth grade reading, fourth in the nation. Eighth grade math scores were lower (23, 40, 37), tenth in the nation. The recent reclassification of the third lowest category from

Deficient to Needs Improvement was the most recent indicator of a continuing concern with tone. Deficient was a category that might ultimately be directed at districts, but it was definitely going to be used with 4th, 8th, and 10th graders who took the initial MCAS exams in the spring of 1998.

Massachusetts uses the familiar language of educational reformers based in citizenship and economic success. It states that the purpose of education is for students to succeed in the 21st century. In November of 1992, the Board of Education stated that the mission of public education in Massachusetts was to "provide each and every child with the values, knowledge and skills needed to achieve full potential in his or her personal and work life and to contribute actively to the civic and economic life of our diverse and changing democratic society" (p. 1). The Massachusetts Board of Education states in the Education Reform Act of 1993 that all children can become lifelong learners and meet high standards.

> Having a diversity of learners in a classroom can create more meaningful dialogue, as each student brings distinct perspectives to the learning process. Students have different styles and needs as learners. This does not mean lowering standards and expectations to accommodate different learning styles. Rather, it is critical to set our sights on both raising the floor (expected minimum levels of accomplishment) and raising the ceiling (the highest academic level for which we strive) of expectations for all our students" (The Common Core of Learning, 1993, pp. 3-6)

In addition, the high standards were not simply set so that children would learn more, they were set higher because children could learn more and succeed if they were held to

higher expectations and had teachers with better training. Researchers had asserted that these standards were still being developed, and had not made it into the classroom in any state.

The Auburn School District

The town of Auburn with a population of 15,005 is both a center of commerce and a suburb of Worcester, demographically described as an economically developed suburb. The town is located approximately 44 miles from Boston and 50 miles from Providence, Springfield, and Hartford. The school district educates 2,282 students, 95% of the school age children. Ninety-seven percent of its students are white. The per pupil cost for education is $5259, which is $209 below the state average. The District's mean SAT scores in 1996 were 963 for Math and Verbal. These scores were 56 points above the state combined average of 907. A large percentage of the students, 87%, participated in the test. Only 16% of the graduates went directly to work; 53% and 28% went to four- or two-year colleges respectively compared to a statewide attendance at college at 54% and 18%. The dropout rate is 0 and has been 0 for five years due in part to its alternative programs and its affiliation with a vocational school. The statewide average is 3.4%. In 1996, The Massachusetts Education Assessment Program (MEAP) score for tenth graders in reading was 1350, 50 points above the state average. Fifty five per cent of the students performed at the Level III and Level IV proficiency levels compared to a state average of 25%. Thirty-one per cent of the tenth graders reported in 1994 that they worked less than one hour on homework (Auburn, 1997).

The Auburn Public Schools had recognized the importance of education reform. Four of the goals stated in the Auburn Public Schools Five-Year Educational Plan,

1994-1999 were to:

- Promote successful K-12 educational programs and establish new programs that ensure that all students reach their physical, emotional, social, and intellectual potential.
- Ensure the Massachusetts Department of Education K-12 curriculum frameworks are in place
- Establish a new generation of student assessment K-12
- Enhance community awareness, understanding and support for the Auburn Public Schools.

The district recognized that education relates to quality of life and economic realities. The Auburn Public Schools recognized that change "means changes in the way teachers teach, the way teachers assess, parent involvement, and integrated services...The Five Year Plan will introduce new curricula and new instructional methods into the classroom. This [plan] will require the physical classrooms to change. New ways of assessing student performance will require teacher professional development" (1994, p. 3).

My Role as Director of Curriculum

Creating my position as Director of Curriculum and Faculty Development was part of Auburn's response to the changes mandated by Education Reform. As I began working in Auburn, I saw some of the impact Education Reform has had on many teachers, schools, and departments. Some teachers work in interdisciplinary teams and are actively engaged in developing project-based education, advocating block schedules and change to the national or local frameworks. On the other side, there are principals

and teachers from kindergarten through the twelfth grade who resist the idea of change in methodology or curriculum. Auburn's teachers' union, speaking for some teachers who want to continue lecturing or using the skills approach, insists that "academic freedom" of methodology is a teacher's basic right (Auburn Public Schools Teacher Contract, 1997 revision). In addition, teachers, parents, townspeople, and administrators question the direction of education reform locally, asking if there is a real need to change at all. Many individuals and groups ask what will happen to the basics? What was wrong with the education that they received? Why spend money to educate teachers or buy computers? (Auburn Public Schools school committee minutes, 1995-1997).

As I began in my new position, Auburn Public Schools had been without a curriculum director for seven years because of budgetary constraints. The Education Reform Act of 1993 had mandated that all Massachusetts teachers were required to become recertified by the year 1998 and to gain credits toward their recertification through coursework, workshops, or documented individual projects. The district's professional development workshops had been limited to a few technology classes. In Auburn professional development depended upon a teacher's initiative in taking courses, workshops, or going to conferences. The Common Chapters and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks created a curriculum that differed from a traditional curriculum with its scope and sequence of mastered skills. The Common Chapters described a constructivist classroom with actively engaged learners solving problems that connected with real life. The English and Language Arts Curriculum, for example, included group work and developing group consensus as major activities for

students. The process of construction of knowledge was now an emphasis, not the acquisition of knowledge alone. Although grammar and spelling skills were part of the content, the English Language Arts Framework emphasized their use in revising and working in peer groups. The proof of this change in teachers was the same as for students, in their practice, not in their espoused beliefs.

From the outset, I felt that I needed to understand the district from the inside and spent time talking to individual teachers, teams, departments, and faculties. I needed to understand how the entire community looked at education and what they valued. As a further method of developing collegial relationships with the teaching staff, the department heads and coordinators, I volunteered to co-teach a class in Humanities at Auburn High School. I also chose to do this because in all of my prior administrative positions I had chosen to teach. I feel that administrators can easily lose sight of the complex world and the daily pressure of education and can forget how complex teaching and change can be.

I also believe that the classroom is where education and the curriculum happen. Writing a curriculum that remained unused in their three-ring binders was not my goal. I needed to experience the real world of the classroom. I needed to look at the mandates of Education Reform and their impact on a classroom. If our curriculum were aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the Common Core of Learning, would changes be necessary, and if so, how would they impact a class?

The Common Core of Learning underscores the responsibility of everyone -- students, families, teachers, guidance counselors, administrators, and the community -- for making each student a successful learner. In addition to these general classroom

guidelines I intended to use as assessment tools for our course, the curriculum frameworks for both English/Language Arts and the Arts which had been accepted by the Massachusetts Board of Education. The final English Language Arts Framework was accepted in February of 1997.

In 1997, the year of this study, Massachusetts was midway between the Education Reform Act of 1993 and its evaluation of its educational reform process. It was at this juncture that I studied a single course in a high school to gain a deeper understanding of assessment. Although Marzano's research had found: "assessment drives instruction" (1992, p. 171), perhaps the failure of education reform in Arizona shows the limitation of that kind of thinking. In Arizona, changing assessment without giving teachers time and support did not effect change.

CHAPTER III

INTERNAL ASSESSMENTS

This chapter describes the evolution of a broad range of assessments that took place in the Humanities classroom. Through a process that I call "collaborative assessment," two very different teachers developed curriculum and set goals and standards. Through experimentation, trial and error, and a developmental process these goals and standards became more complex and better articulated throughout the year. At the end of the chapter I describe the elaborate and often uncomfortable process of assessing two somewhat resistant students.

> *"I think if I had worked alone the class would have been better for me, and if you had worked alone the class would have seemed better to you. But this way I think the class is better for the students."*
>
> *Mr. Parsons*
> *Interview June 12*

Setting Standards in the Context of the Classroom

This chapter describes the process of collaborative assessment. In our classroom, assessment was an ongoing process, among teachers and students, almost inseparable from planning. In a year, my co-teacher and I learned from and adapted to one another's styles as teachers and at the same time learned from and adapted to one another's assessments. Unit by unit we decided what our final goals were and then put the steps together for our students to get there. We spent the whole year adjusting, questioning, and redesigning our lessons, and assessing our own performance and goals. By year end our goals and standards were fairly clear to one another and to the

students. At the beginning of the year, Mr. Parsons and I shared a student-centered philosophy. We both cared about students. Yet, because he was a third-year choral music teacher and I was an experienced English teacher, we were very different in our expectations about our outcomes, competencies, and goals.

This was the first Humanities class for both of us. In addition to Mr. Parsons's and my different ages, experience, and professional backgrounds, we had different learning styles. We had taken the 4-MAT, a learning style inventory, with our students at the beginning of the year. Mr. Parsons was what was called "abstract sequential." He worked on the concept level, but liked order and organization. My style was called "random abstract," again, working conceptually, but linking diverse areas. Because of our shared way of understanding learning, we communicated our general standards easily in terms of concepts: building an understanding of an historical era, using many modalities to learn, performing, writing, as well as taking tests. As we built assignments our differences were generally complementary. I tended to connect themes and other disciplines to whatever we were doing and gathered a diversity of materials. He tended to make sure that we had a logical structure and that the class had closure with a test because this satisfied his sense of structure. However, from the first, at my suggestion we modified the test taking conditions by allowing students to use their notes and time lines. Yet, he did not like to move to the next topic until the last was absolutely clear and finished. Sometimes I felt that we had exhausted a topic before he did. I did not like confusion, but I liked students to be stretched and pushed. I liked change and a dynamic environment.

We both valued individual growth and supported students through conferences.

We both read and evaluated every student's work often together, sometimes separately. However, we always entered marks together. Because of Mr. Parsons's orderly mind, he became keeper of the mark book and of staying on track and on time. I sought out a diversity of activities, materials and readings. We both shared the belief that students needed a variety of learning experiences to bring about growth, so together we devised projects with both organization and diversity. His forte was organization, mine diversity.

Mr. Parsons was "laid back" as the students said. A gifted pianist and vocalist who could give stunning musical examples for the class, he was a gentle coach to the students. I felt that he was particularly strong at giving feedback. In the middle of grading papers on which he had already commented, I said: "I like the way you give feedback to kids: you take it apart and [give them] the process of it. You evaluate so completely---maybe because you come to it through music where there are performances and processes? --And it's not that easy to give people a number in art." He coached students well. In a few words he would say what was good about their work and how they might improve. On Spencer's music project he commended his research ("great synthesis of material"), and citations "thorough research in a short time" but prodded him for more reflection before he did his oral presentation: "A great informational paper--What did you think of him? What fascinated you about him?" As he passed back the papers, he reminded students that they needed to include a personal response in their presentations in class. Then the students sought out his help as they prepared note cards for their presentations. In his quiet way, he was clear and strong in his direction.

Our discussions were, I felt, real collaborations. For example, Mr. Parsons thought we were getting a bit too broad and diverse when I brought in a draft of the self-designed project. I developed simplified graphic organizers to clarify the requirements in the initial assignment and a checklist a before they passed in their projects (Appendices D and G).

Sometimes I felt we were moving too slowly and carefully and would suggest a major shift. The quarter final and the final projects were both thematic connections with many pieces, the kind of assignment that I preferred. He helped me make it clear and simple. After we had decided on the final exam for the juniors, he said: "I think if I had worked alone the class would have been better for me, and if you had worked alone the class would have seemed better to you. But this way I think the class is better for the students." I agreed. We balanced one another.

At the end of the year, he wished his music unit could have lasted longer; I had thought he should have finished much sooner. On the other hand, I wished we had read and written more. We were both worriers. Mr. Parsons said that he talked and thought more about the course than he had ever thought about a course. We worried about whether or not we were going too slowly, too fast, reading too much, too little, breaking too many rules, or being too careful. We worried about each student and celebrated each success. We developed our units around our assessment of what would work for the entire class. By the end of the year we began to think we provided a good balance because of the successes of our students and because of their evaluation of the course and their progress. What we had achieved in assessment was a weaving together of what was taught, how it was taught, and how it was evaluated.

> The research of recent years has begun to heal the splits that exist between reading, writing, teaching, and learning, as well as those that exist between research, theory, and practice. There has been an increasing realization that all represent acts of composition and reflection. Evaluation, on the other hand, has remained separate from teaching, learning, reading, and writing. (Sayter & Johnston, 1997, p. 253).

Recent theory has revealed that to improve learning, assessment needs move further away from testing and move toward feedback and conversation so that it is an integral part of the learning and teaching process. Although the definition of assessment is to judge the value of something, the word is derived from the Latin assedere to sit by (as an assistant judge) and from the Latin roots ad- near to + sedere, to sit (American Heritage Dictionary, 1982, p. 134). The first and official definition has a connotation of distance and evaluation; the original Latin has a sense of closeness and collaboration. Mr. Parsons and I literally and figuratively sat by our students. In the Humanities class, students, teachers, and both together assessed themselves and were assessed both from a distance and "sitting near" one another. Teachers graded and coached; students self-evaluated and asked for assistance. But we also tested and judged. Using this instructional perspective students are not graded on how well or poorly they perform, but on the kind of assistance they need to be successful. (Bond, 1997, pp. 3-4.)

Our Shared Goals

Our shared goals can be inferred from the projects and exams that we gave during the final quarter, which are organized in the table below from most frequently assessed to least frequently assessed. We gave a wide variety of assessments to our

students throughout the year from traditional tests to portfolios to puppet shows. During the last quarter, 8 weeks long for the seniors and 10 weeks for the juniors, we gave the students 9 separate graded assessments (See Appendix B). If approximately 3 for seniors and 4 for seniors is the average number of assignments for all types of assessment, then it is clear that reading for information and literature were the most often required areas. The communication, reflection, or analysis of information generally included an oral component and a written one. Perhaps the most notable difference from a more traditional classroom is that oral work, presentations, conferences, and group work were all essential parts of the learning environment.

Table 1

Areas of Assessment from April 4-June 13.

Kind of activity	Area	Seniors (7 total assignments)	Juniors (9 total assignments)
Reading	Texts	7	7
Reading	Literature	5	6
Oral language	Presentation	4	5
Writing	Reflection	4	4
Writing	Analysis	3	5
Written	Self assessment	3	4
Written	Self assessment	3	4
Writing	Research/Summary of information	3	4
Writing or other modes	Creative interpretation	2	4
Writing	Connection to student or to real life	2	2
Oral Language	Group work	1	3
Oral Language	Interview/Conference (one to one)	1	

Accountability: oral	"How are you doing, are you on task?"	ongoing	ongoing
Accountability: written	brief daily self-assessment	daily note cards during research	daily note cards during research
Average		3.1	4.1

Conferences, self-assessment, and group work took place almost every day. The conferences, self-assessment, and group work categories in this table are limited to activities on which students were evaluated. Self-assessment and conferences were not always a graded part of the assignments, but we held daily conferences with all students. Sometimes students gave us a self-assessment on a note card, sometimes the conference was an informal: "So how is this project going?" Because we were not directing the whole class, we worked with each group and individual almost daily.

The following were our shared goals:

- Students **read** from many arts and humanities texts, from research on the Internet, and from literature.
- Students **wrote** in many different modes throughout the year. We asked them to write in three or four different genres: reflection, creative writing, analysis and synthesis. They wrote academically, personally, and creatively.
- We wanted students to **connect** to their learning as "scholars" or "artists," to connect personally to their lives or to the twentieth century, and
- to **interpret** what they understood **creatively through stories, visualizations, collages, and transformations**, when students reinterpreted a work into another mode, for example, draw a picture to represent a poem, or write a poem to represent

a sculpture or a symphony. Sean's history of the Beat Generation in Chapter V is a transformation of a formal history or paper into a folk song.

- We **supported** students, made **modifications** in assignments, and suggested alternatives to every assignment. By giving students **not yets** instead of grades we hoped that students would continue to improve.
- Our goals generally were to **promote growth** and appreciation as well as to make students familiar with some of the ideas of Western culture.

Our student-centered orientation was reflected in each taped discussion. We adjusted our assignments to individual student needs. We adjusted our whole class to meet the needs of the majority of the students. Chapter V describes the ways in which we adjusted our assignments for different students.

In addition, conferences and peer discussion were ongoing. As we went through the year, we became less traditional and more learning-centered, as described in The Common Core of Learning (1993). By the end of the year we expected our students to:

- be challenged
- use a variety of strategies to solve problems
- make connections between what they are learning and their lives
- make connections across the disciplines and to real-world tasks
- to integrate and synthesize information
- use assessment as a process and tool to enhance student learning

The next section describes our first attempt during the first quarter of the year to modify assessment and the resistance we met.

An Assessment Change: A, B, Not Yet

As we read our first set of papers in October, we made our first major assessment decision on the first challenging assignment. We realized that most of the students had not accomplished the task. The class had read, studied, listened to guest lectures, and had seen a live performance of Arcadia by Tom Stoppard. In addition to following a five-week study guide provided by the theater with Mr. Parsons, the students had read, listened to a guest lecture, and had seen the play. The writing assignment had challenged the students to write their analysis of the main idea of this very complex play about, for instance, historiography, chaos theory, love and lust, and gardens. (See the assignment in Appendix E.)

The play takes place both during the present and in 1809. The present characters try to solve the mystery about a scandal that had taken place two centuries before. The characters from both centuries are parallel; in both there is a love triangle, a fascination with the origin and end of time, and a conflict between rationality and emotion. Although the play was complex, I thought the unit had been done well; the students had been exposed to many levels of interpretation in class. Before we went to see the play, a member of the cast had visited the class to prepare the students. He discussed the major themes in a lively discussion that he began by juggling to show the complexity of the play. The students had enjoyed the play and were engaged in a discussion with Mr. Parsons and me after seeing it.

The guidelines for the assignment read:

1.	Develop a thesis. What is the play about? (Imagine *you're* the person who is going to prepare a class to see the play. Would you juggle? Did you explain it to a friend? A parent?)
2.	In the body of your essay, give three substantive examples from The play

The set
The characters
The presentation before class
The play book (excellent resource)

3. Develop an interesting introduction

4. At least three major ideas WITH QUOTES

5. And a conclusion that discusses how this issue [the thesis] is resolved at the end of the play.

We had given them "food for thought" and had brainstormed and discussed all of the following topics:

- What is Arcadia about? ("It's wanting to know that makes us matter." Hannah. There is no RIGHT ANSWER, but there are well-thought-out and well-written answers.

Consider:

- Gardens: What is the point of all of this?
- Time: How many eras?
- History (Byron--fierce individualist, passionately follows ideals)
- Sex: Is this a love story? a lust story?
- Chaos (small changes in the initial situation can result in wildly divergent results)
- Mechanistic universes: a "clockwork" universe
- A soap opera
- Juggling metaphor: many things, but take it as a whole, then it is about.....
- Waltz Describe the way the last scene resolves the two stories.
- Thinking versus feeling (combining both is best in the play)
- Look at it as a traditional story: What is the climax? The resolution with the waltz?

This is a story of chaos: Newton found an orderly universe for very large and very small phenomena, but people live in the seemingly chaotic area between along with weather, raindrops, etc.

- The Second Law of Thermodynamics: a universe that is dead at the end, without heat (steam engine). Entropy: life all goes from order to chaos, but cannot reverse (rice pudding)
- It is a story of character and character parallels and contrasts.
- It is a story of love and lust.
- It is a story about how much we distort history. (Consider the mystery, The Arrow of Time, Byron.)

- It is a story (soap opera) about the decline of thought into feeling (the ridiculous Gothic gardens, the affairs, the difficulty of loving, Thomasina(?))

It is a story about "two vibrant lives lived with passion and vitality that seemingly passed into history unknown and unremembered by future generation. Chaos theory allows us to see that those lives, and all our lives, are like the flap of a butterfly's wing." (Intro. to Arcadia, 2)

- Valentine: We are at the beginning again, knowing almost nothing. People were talking about the end of physics. Relativity and quantum looked as if they were going to clean out the whole problem between them. A theory of everything. But they only explained the very big and the very small. The universe, the elementary particles. The ordinary-sized stuff which is our lives, the things people write poetry about--clouds--daffodils--waterfalls--and what happens in a cup of coffee when the cream goes in--these things are full of mystery, as mysterious to us as the heavens were to the Greeks.

In October, we did not want to fail students, and we did not want to lower our standards. The students had received feedback in peer review groups from both of us, yet, despite these measures, had not really polished their papers. Because the former teaching team said that they had experimented with an A, B, Not Yet grading system for projects, we decided to try it. Mr. Parsons had taught in elementary school and felt comfortable breaking this high school grading tradition; I had always liked the positive frame of "not yet" on kindergarten report cards. We took our first experimental step into changing how students were graded. To the great consternation, not relief, of the class we gave out many Not Yets. We thought students would welcome a chance to revise, but they wanted to know what their "real grade" would be. Some said if the grade were a C that they would take it so that they did not have to revise the essay. We were surprised at their lack of initiative, but on later assignments, we continued to give A, B, Not Yets, and recorded what the "real grade" would be in our mark book, just in case we received no further revision. Then, those students who chose not to revise and

who were satisfied with Cs or even Ds would at least receive a grade. When we insisted on revision, we received recopied papers with spelling and grammar edits from most students, but without any real rethinking. However, there were some exceptions. Some students worked harder than ever before because of the Not Yets, so that they would not receive them. We had thought that the chance to improve a paper and a grade would have been an incentive to students. I asked the head of the English department about this resistance. He said that most students "at best" edited their papers. Later in the semester, we would have provided the students with more time to brainstorm as groups. We were still trying to have the class work in a fairly traditional way.

They had not grappled with the complexities. Now that I look at the assignment, I realize that we had not provided the time or the way to do this. We might have asked students to decide on their thesis and work with a group to find substantiation for their ideas. They needed to have the information organized before they began writing. As I reflected on this first assignment, I used our final goals to assess our first major assignment. I graded it with a 4 meaning that the assignment would have been at the same level as we had attained at the end of the year and a 0 meaning that this was not acceptable by our later standards.

Common Core Standards	Arcadia Assignment	0-4
Challenging	Complex play, real performance, guest lecturer, illustrated terms	4 Was it too challenging?
Use a variety of strategies to solve problems	Visualization of gardens. Writing (Appendix E), peer review of paper, discussion	4 (Did we give them enough stricture?)
Make connections between	Some ideas connected: love, lust, but	1

what they are learning and their lives	was that all? Mainly academic connections?	
Make connections across the disciplines and to real-world tasks	They could have pretended to be a critic when they wrote their paper.	1
Integrate and synthesize information	Writing assignment: they didn't have enough organized to integrate or synthesize	2
Use assessment as a process and tool to enhance student learning	Peer review, revision, but we did not have groups work together to solve problems.	1

I can see now that by standards that we had evolved by the end of the year, the reasons that we (and our students) had not done well in this assignment. We had not grounded the ideas in their experiences, had not given them time to organize the information for their own essay, and had not let them practice their theories with one another. I would have preferred that this assignment had been given later in the year. As a first writing assignment it was very challenging.

The Range of Assessments

This was our first lesson in assessment. We were always experimenting, compromising and improvising. By the end of third quarter our students had surveyed the Western arts, music and literature from Ancient Greece to the Modern Era. They had created group mobiles to represent an era. The Gothic mobile's flying buttresses were made from coat hangers from which note cards and drawings from group presentations had fluttered. We had held a Renaissance Christmas party, a sugar castle competition, and put a suicide on trial in a contemporary Everyman morality play. Students had become docents in our humanities art museum and had described their favorite Impressionist panting. Macbeth was tried and found "not hero." Students had explained world music to an alien, critiqued a Mozart opera as an eighteenth century

writer, and had read or seen six plays: Oedipus, Everyman, Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet, Amadeus, My Beloved, and Arcadia. The students had some choices in the selections, but the selections were limited by the texts that we had. A student had downloaded Everyman during her research in the Middle Ages. Because of that, we read Everyman. We read Romeo and Juliet because a contemporary Romeo and Juliet had just been released. Each student had maintained a time line for all of the eras. They kept all of their own work, the information passed out during the presentations from other groups, and were able to use the time line as reference during all tests. Despite the amount of material that we had covered this was not a lecture course. Neither my co-teacher nor I generally talked for more than the first few and last few minutes of class for organizational purposes.

For the last 12 weeks of class I taped conversations that my co-teacher and I had about planning the course and evaluating student work. Also, I taped student performances, conferences, and year-end evaluations, discussed the course with former teachers and the head of the English Department, and collected all of the student work. (See Appendix B The Matrix of Assessments for a list of all documented data.)

We were still experimenting and still not exactly sure what would and would not work. My study began with the final exam for third quarter. Mr. Parsons had just finished a unit on three eras of music, Classical, Romantic, and Modern. They had played parts of characters, a performer, and a person explaining music to an alien. They had done research. I felt that we needed to have the students make connections between the music they had studied and the art and literature in each era. When I showed my co-teacher the proposed third quarter exam, he thought that it was too

complex.

We were both surprised that the exam was as successful as it had been. The exam took three days, two for the students to gather material and organize it, and the third to write the exam in class. The third quarter exam asked students to select three specific works, one each of art, literature, and music and to explain how they represented a specific era and why they related to those works.

The Process: More and More Complexity

Our third quarter exam was the most complex assignment up to this time. It was also the first day of taping for this study. On April 4, 1997, Mr. Parsons and I had been co-teaching for three-quarters of a year. We had met almost daily at 7:30 in the Chorus Room, Mr. Parsons's homeroom, to discuss the class. For both of us this was an hour added to our days. Both of us were concerned because we had given the students only three days to accomplish a very challenging assignment. We had worked on the art, literature, music, and architecture of the Classical, Romantic, and Modern Eras during the third quarter. Their final exam for the quarter was to select from our studies any three works of art, music, and literature and to write a paper with a unifying theme or thesis, a description of the era, and a reflection about why this work had been selected. This paper was different from the Arcadia paper because we were going to have students anchor their ideas in a concrete example: a quotation, a picture, and a musical composition. We had both worked with students as they selected works that they especially liked or wanted to discuss. We had given them time to grapple with the pieces before we asked them to synthesize them. The following is a brief section of our discussion. We were still struggling to maintain the balance between setting high

standards and keeping students motivated, and Mr. Parsons was still very anxious that this task was too difficult.

Assessment as a Tool to Assist Learning

Mr. Parsons said: "With Amy...We were going through the paintings. Amy found 'Starry Night' and she loved it. She's putting it together with her poem on the color blue..." Amy had struggled all year. Mr. P. had supported her the day before by talking with her as she looked at prints so that she would select something that she liked and make her own connection to art.

I said: "When they're given an assignment, they need you to sit next to them. Even though you say, 'Pick something you like' they need you to say it's okay because...because I don't know why. Is it because it's [this class, having choices] is so different from what usually happens? Is it because education is supposed to be disconnected from who they are?" Words somehow weren't enough for students to trust their own likes or dislikes, or was it that they weren't sure they could trust us or our questions?

Then Mr. Parsons described a student who had been searching for music for the project. He had suggested a piece that she had written a report on. Sarah was surprised and said: "Oh, I can do *him*?" Mr. Parsons had said: "It's kinda like letting them see they know more than they think they do."

I wondered if the assignment sounded more sophisticated than they thought they could handle. "I hope they do well on this." I was anxious as well. The bell rang and we both went to class.

We had challenged the students with an assessment and had supported them as

they worked to prepare for the test. Often the support was telling them that they already had the answer or giving them the time and confidence to construct their own answer.

The Process of Evaluation

After the students had taken their quarterly exam, Mr. Parsons and I sat in the empty classroom and began to read the papers out loud. Our marks were due that Monday. We were surprised. To my eyes, most of the papers were excellent because they went beyond the usual summary of our words or of the textbooks. They had analyzed and related to the works. They had made connections to their own lives, and used words and comparisons that were their own to describe unfamiliar cultures (funky music), and had made their own connections between works of art, literature and music. They had reflected on new ideas and had constructed meaning for themselves. I could see that "they've made connections...art, literature, music.....another A? I think they took a leap."

Mr. Parsons said: "I think I'll count these grades twice." [Mr. Parsons maintained the grade book. I think he had felt that if the students had failed that he would have given this test less weight. Because they had done well, he was willing to count them in the way he would normally count a test.] "You could just tell when they came in today. They knew what they had to do, and they did it!" We were surprised.

We had coached and supported for two days, and on the third day the students worked independently. This was the best work that they had done all year as individuals and as a class. They had been challenged and had worked hard to accomplish their tasks. The two days of coaching had worked far better than the Not

Yets written on an already constructed paper.

Alfie Kohn warns against the overemphasis on assessment of any kind, authentic or traditional. He contends that when students constantly think: "How am I doing?" they lose intrinsic motivation and focus on performance (1995). We tried to place our emphasis, not on how the students were doing, but on *what* they were doing *next*. Dweck found that students will take advantage of assessments only if they believe that errors are "opportunities for learning as opposed to confirmation of their inadequacy" (1991). We tried to help students to see their adequacies. Perhaps by entering the process earlier in the process of the third quarter exam, students saw our assistance as an opportunity. Even though we gave students a chance to revise with the Not Yets, perhaps they saw them as indications of inadequacy. We did not help them to see that they would learn something (not just get an A) through the revision. Perhaps having a limited focus, three specific concrete works in the exam, had also been helpful for the students to gain a sense of control.

Final Self-designed Project

Our last major assignment was the culmination of all of the learning from the entire year. It was once again more complex and extended over a longer period of time than our third quarter exam. (Appendix F.) As we announced the assignment, we again created anxiety.

The following snapshot is a description of assessment the day we announced the project. Again, my co-teacher and I were anxious; the students were also. At 8:35 in the morning in the middle of May 1997, the twenty-five students of the Humanities class at Auburn High School walked into class singly and in small groups. They assembled around tables or at their desks in the basement of the high school. Our

morning class and the afternoon preschool program shared the room, a jumble of large and small furniture, standard sized desks, tiny beanbags, rectangular cafeteria tables, and tiny pre-school furniture. The walls held a strange combination of preschool signs, gargoyles, and Renaissance masks. From lines along the ceiling were hung mobiles for Ancient, Gothic, and Renaissance eras and an improvised curtain for the puppet theater. The theater crayons, markers, and the costume box were shared by both preschoolers and high school students.

The school year was nearing its end; the fourteen seniors had only a few weeks left before their final exams and graduation, and the eleven juniors had six more weeks of classes. As I passed out the assignment Amie, a spontaneous student, gasped: " It's three pages long!" She was a junior, and had many personal problems that year which had interfered with her work.

I tried to calm Amy. "Two pages are just examples. But it [the Final Project Assignment] includes all the different things we've done this year."

Mr. Parsons added: "But you select the topic or theme or era."

Cate was smiling. She enjoyed working on projects independently. "Just what I've always dreamed of. I want to do a video and audio and a journal." Cate often set her standards so high that she couldn't finish.

Mr. Parsons said: "I know you said you wanted to do 'Cate's View of the Humanities.' Yes, use whatever you want, but keep the requirements in mind. Remember we want you to put this together for yourself. This is not just a research paper about what others think. It has to be about what you think. Find something you're interested in."

A tiny voice came from the back of the room: "I'll never be able to do this. This is too much. What does this mean, a transformation?"

"Remember, when you wrote a poem about a painting and when you drew a picture to illustrate a poem?" Mr. Parsons began to discuss the assignments. "Let's go over the assignment sheet: you need to do research, to reflect, and to put it together into a presentation. (You can present it to the whole class, tape it, or present it to Mrs. B. and me privately.) Also, you need to do something creative, to compare and contrast. Read over the choices on the first page and ask general questions, then we'll work with everyone individually. The third page of the assignment has a place for you to get organized." We began to work with our students to help them to understand what we expected. They were to read, write, present, transform, self-assess, account for their daily work with note cards, and have a final conference with us. They were to grade themselves using the following checklist:

Use the following descriptions to decide on what you believe your grades should be for the final project and final quarter.

A= Outstanding, superior, excellent. You went beyond the requirement.
B= Good, solid work. Everything is in order. Well done.
C= Average work, perhaps some things are missing. It's OK, but it could be better.
D= Work is not fully done. You've skipped some major responsibilities.
F= Incomplete or missing.

The categories may overlap. For example, creative writing may be your transformation.

Categories (√ grade for each)	A	B	C	D	F
Research					
Reflection					
Formal Writing					
Creative Writing					
Transformation					
Comparison/Contrast					

Daily Work					
Project as a Whole					
Other: (growth, motivation, helping others)					
Quarter Grade (Include play, playbill)					

They had to decide on what their focusing question or topic was. They could trace games, or dance, or philosophy through different cultures and eras, study one particularly appreciated artist or era, or research a topic of particular interest. After I was sure they had a sense of each of the parts, and of how it might go together, I decided to help them begin. I said: "Let's begin today by having you decide on a topic or a theme."

Jake, a senior, said: "I don't get it. So it's not six different papers?"

I tried to have them understand that this was one project with many pieces. There were pockets of enthusiasm. Francine said: "Can I build something? I'd really like to do a Gothic Cathedral." Tom said: "We can build things? How about a castle?" The class continued. One student wanted to study AIDS and we suggested the parallel to historical plagues. One student wanted to study the Beat Generation because of his fascination with Bob Dylan's predecessors. Mr. Parsons and I helped students to find a project that interested them and was possible to complete.

Again, we had created an assessment that challenged them and then we supported students in class as they worked their way through it. This final project encompassed our collective standards and values. This went beyond the third quarter exam because we were asking students to do research, to present their work and to structure it in a way that represented them. As we passed out the project the students

were assessing this complex assignment, and some began to assess themselves, their interests, strengths, and weaknesses. The teachers, too, were evaluating the effect and effectiveness of this very complicated assignment. Mr. Parsons felt this assignment was too complex. He preferred doing one thing at a time. I felt that each part of the assignment had been done at least once before as a single assignment and that students understood our requirements for research, writing, presentation, transformations, etc.

Assessment Imbedded in Teaching and Learning

As part of this self designed project, students formally evaluated themselves and the course in relationship to their learning. Students worked individually, with each of the two teachers, with the librarian, with other teachers, and with one another to complete their assignments. Mr. Parsons and I met daily, reviewing their daily progress slips, and evaluating individual and class progress. We discussed how to keep the almost-graduated seniors on task, Amie from giving up hope, and Cate from being too ambitious and never finishing. We supplied information, direction, gave feedback, and held conferences with each student each day. Students wrote progress reports on note cards daily. We created this monitoring system because students were disbursed throughout the building in computer labs, in the library, as well as in the class as they worked on their projects.

Our class was diverse in personality and needs. It was a heterogeneous class open to all juniors and seniors. Many of the students enjoyed the arts but did not like the structure of academic subjects. A few of the fifteen seniors felt that they had already spent too many years studying and were ready to stop working. Also in the class were a foreign exchange student from Switzerland, a Special Education student who had learning problems and an educational plan, and a few students who habitually

missed school. Two of the 16 seniors were not planning to go to college immediately after school. Some of the students were highly motivated. Cate's project needed to be downsized because she wanted to include all of time in it. She videotaped, edited, researched on the Internet, taped music, wrote scripts, and assembled a journal for the viewer to follow. About an equal number of students were passive and hard to reach. We had to take trips to the library to assure ourselves that three of the seniors were there. Once we found them, we needed to prod them about what they had done. Once prodded, we needed to remind them of the due dates.

Almost all except perhaps two of the students did not want to stand in front of the class to present. When a few students had talked to Mr. Parsons privately, we then gave students the option of presenting to us privately or videotaping the presentation for us. Traditionally, artistic students who wanted to perform and create had taken the course. Somehow we had attracted the shy students, or they had become shy because of the makeup of the class. Our "popular" and sometimes negative seniors, Scot, Carrie, and John, may have inhibited the more artistic members of the class, many of whom were juniors. Mr. Parsons and I gave options to students so that they could tape (audio or video) their performances or have private conferences with us for their final projects. The seniors all chose private conferences. The juniors happily presented to the remaining nine juniors after graduation. We thought that their reticence might have been a particular blend of seniors and juniors.

We generally began the class with a few minutes to get oriented and to answer general interest questions, but most of the time students worked together or on their own on their projects except on test days, like the quarter exam, or presentation days.

We had given unit tests at the end of each era for three quarters. There were no final tests during the last quarter. To maintain a sense of momentum, we scheduled conferences, worked with those who requested help, and asked for a daily progress report.

After students had finished their projects, they had to pass in their papers and schedule a conference with us. To further demonstrate that assessment was ongoing (and often fraught with anxiety), I have traced a series of teacher/teacher and teacher/student conferences for a single project for two seniors. I have chosen them because these two students were very passive. Popular seniors, they had been ready to stop work sometime in January. The conversations are excerpted from three longer transcripts.

Two Unmotivated Students: The Anxiety of Assessment

It was the end of May; the seniors had only a week left. Mr. Parsons and I were in the Chorus room before class. The self-designed project had been the major grade for the semester. I said: "Mr. Parsons, what are we going to do about Carrie and Scot [two seniors]? They did absolutely nothing in the library for two days this week." I had gone to the library to work with some students there, but the two of them had avoided work and me. I had tried to motivate Carrie by bringing in books on ballet (she danced), and had tried to engage Scot in discussions about art because he liked drawing. However, at best I received blank stares. They were not disruptive in class, just unresponsive. Carrie often asked to be dismissed from class to videotape the seniors for their video yearbook. Scot generally did the least amount of work that he could. They were part of what other students called the popular group. He played basketball;

she was a cheerleader. Carrie had been suspended from school for ambushing, scratching, and physically fighting with another girl who was supposedly her rival for a boyfriend. Carrie had not had a good year outside of our class. I could not determine if the work was too difficult for Scot or if he simply would not make any effort.

Their behavior was the exception in a very positive class. I had taken both of them aside as we had begun this project to tell them that they had to fulfill this requirement to graduate. Mr. Parsons and I devised the note card system for daily reports primarily to keep these two students accountable.

Mr. Parsons sorted out a pile of papers. "We have a little bit of a problem with their final project here." Mr. Parsons had taken the papers home to review the night before. "Only one paper was turned in for two people [Scot and Carrie]."

"I know that we said something about that [in the original assignment]. Do you have a copy of it?"

Mr. Parsons found the assignment in his three- ring binder. Mr. Parsons was very organized. He read: "'If you work as a group, each person must have at least two pages of information and must write a one-page reflection separately.' It [the paper that was turned in] is much more than the minimum. It's about ten pages. The reflection is good, though. Why don't you look at it?"

I looked at the ten-page typed final project on Michelangelo. They had photocopied five of his major works and had described them. There was one poorly traced picture of the Pieta. "This reflection is good, but it's just Carrie's. [A student had told me that Carrie had used the office computer to type the paper.] What do you want to do when we have the conference with them?" I was not looking forward to this

confrontation. "They have to evaluate their daily work, their research, everything. Is there anything creative in the project? What do you want to grade this as?"

"Let's wait until after we have the conference," he smiled.

"Good idea. It's too bad, Paul. Carrie's reflection is really good, or at least funny. I wish she had been more like this during the class. Look. She says, 'Mrs. Saluki [the library aide] found us some information, but it wasn't what we needed. So we scraped together the information we had and wrote a paper. I'm not entirely happy with the final results of the paper, we found more valuable information a little too late, which is basically the story of my senior year.' Funny," I smiled; Mr. Parsons did not smile. Until this assignment, Carrie had refused to write a reflection, insisting that she didn't understand what a reflection was and giving us a summary of more information. She maintained throughout the year that reflections and connections between their lives and the eras they were studying were "too vague" as assignments. Carrie had gone through the motions of doing her work, but had never truly brought herself into the process. She had always passed in assignments that fulfilled the "letter of the law," with the correct number of pages. Although her connection between doing too little too late may seem minimal, this was the first time that she had recognized that her lack of effort may have been responsible for the quality of her projects.

Mr. Parsons was frowning as he flipped through the paper. "Look at the bibliography! Three cards stapled to the paper." He looked through the rest of the paper. He softened. "But the rest is really put together well."

"Is their conference today?"

" Yes."

"This may be unpleasant." We left for class and began to meet with other seniors for their final conferences. When we called Scot and Carrie, I asked: "Do you both have self-evaluations?" Scot did not. Carrie passed hers in.

"What's a transformation?" Carrie was looking at her self-evaluation and realized she had not filled in the block next to Transformation. (See Appendix G Final Self-evaluation/Conference).

I defined this term, which was defined in the project, again. Students had difficulty remembering the meaning of this term perhaps because it was not a traditional term from English classes. I often felt that they knew the definition, but simply didn't know where to begin to make a transformation.

"Oh." Carrie knew that she did not have one.

Mr. Parsons, giving some encouragement said: "It could also be your reinterpretation of a work of art, like the Pieta."

Scot: "The what?" Scot had traced the picture for the project. I speculated that this was his only and minimal contribution.

Mr. Parsons said: "The sculpture you drew a picture of."

Carrie said: "So that's a transformation?"

"No," Mr. Parsons's face was serious. "It could have been if you tried to do it differently-- as *you* see it."

Carrie asked: "So, we don't have a transformation?"

"Not really." Mr. Parsons looked at Carrie directly.

I said to Scot. "Did you do a reflection?"

"No." Scot looked untroubled. His answer was just for my information.

"You needed to do one." Scot still looked untroubled. Then I look at Carrie and said: "This [the reflection] is really well written. Really reflective. Shows real writing ability."

Carrie nodded. She did not smile.

"Scot, what did you do in this project?" I asked.

Scot said nothing

"Did you do the drawing?" Scot nodded yes. "What does it represent? Who are these people [Pointing to the picture he drew of Michelangelo's Pieta]?"

Scot said nothing.

"It's a mother and son? Do you know the person she's holding?"

Scot said nothing

I said: "It's Christ being held by Mary." I tried for a positive tone: " You like to draw, Scot. What did you think of the shape? Is it accurate?" I was hoping that Scot would say something.

Scot said nothing.

Can you see the proportions are changed? Christ is smaller? ... To make the shape the favorite shape of the Renaissance? A triangle? Can you see it? Can you feel the heaviness?

Scot nodded heavily: "It's heavy."

"Yes? Anything else..."

Mr. Parsons said, hoping to give Scot some help: "She looks like she's carrying a burden."

"Can you see where Michelangelo was fascinated by bodies and muscles more

so than personalities?" I said.

Scot said: "Yeah..."

I asked: "Do you have anything you'd like to say about Michelangelo? About the project?"

Both shook their heads no.

Mr. Parsons asked what he has asked of each student: "In six months to a year...what will you remember about this course?"

Carrie said: "'Fur Elise'. ...I learned about music."

Mr. Parsons, Carrie, and I looked at Scot. "I don't know."

I asked what I've asked all of the seniors: "Where are you going to college next year?"

"UMASS, Amherst."

"Regis," Scott said.

Mr. Parsons said: "Good luck next year."

We had to give them a grade. The next morning before class, after discussing other papers, I picked up Scot and Carrie's paper. I said to Mr. Parsons: "Carrie, she did a self-assessment, research, a real reflection, I guess the transformation was the Pieta, not really, though, no creative writing, no comparison, weak on daily work. A C?"

Mr. Parsons said: "She did do a lot of extra work in the research. It was ten pages, well written. And her reflection was very good. Plus she did get in her daily summaries, except the day she disappeared. [She went to the nurse's office and never returned.] How about a B-, an 80?"

"But they [the ten pages] were really just summaries...OK. I guess. But she cut a class. [Sighs] What does she get for a final?"

"A C-, a 70?" I winced. " I know. But she did do a fairly good job in the other work and she did some very good work also on this reflection."

"I guess that's fair. And Scot. He did, at most, that tracing of a painting that he didn't know anything about, even when prodded."

"A 55. He did do daily summaries." They had been written in Scot's terse style, such as: "I looked up information about Michelangelo. I found two books." Fifty-five is the lowest grade allowed in the high school.

"OK. And with the other grades?"

"A 60. He just passes." We had to translate letter grades to numbers for the computer. An F was a 55. A D- could be an 60 to a 63. He would receive a D- on his report card, but the number entered for his grade would be a 60. The school did not use grade point averages.

"I wonder what's going to happen to him in college?"

"Either he wakes up, or flunks out first semester."

"We never got to him.... So frustrating."

"I wonder if anyone did."

Although many of the seniors came back during the next week to see us and to get their grades, neither of these students did. They seemed unreachable. They remained passive in the midst of a great deal of activity and enthusiasm in the class. Their resistance made grading them more difficult and perhaps we overcompensated with kindness in grading them. I might have given her a C on her reflection because

she had only summarized, although she had written far more than required. A B meant that all of the required work was completed competently. I had to admit that she had carefully written and edited her work. Her work was generally very literal and close to the source. Scot had failed the last quarter with a 55. I felt that number was an act of kindness, but it was the lowest number that we could give because of the High School's grading system. It is clear, as we gave them positive responses, however, that we wanted these two students to succeed as much as they could even though they had been difficult throughout the year.

Mr. Parsons and I had sat with both of them, praised them when they did well, and when they began to seem to quit with seniorits, developed a daily report just to be sure they stayed on track. Perhaps that warning may have added more resistance to the final conferences. Still, in an entire year we had not reached them. Was it their social status as "popular" students that allowed them to be so resistant?

Laurence Steinberg, co-author of Beyond the Classroom: Why School Reform Has Failed and What Parents Need to Do, describes the student attitude of "getting by" as the norm in American schools. Eighty percent of students say that it is not important to their friends what their grades are. Seventy-five percent do not discuss their schoolwork with their friends. But most disturbing of all is that twenty percent of students say they do not try as hard as they can so that they will not be censured by their friends for good grades. Although Steinberg says the schools have a responsibility because they do not reward excellence, he asserts that they have been aided and abetted by parents, employers, and colleges. He states:

In our study, more than half of all students said they could bring home grades of

> "C" or worse without their parents getting upset, and one-quarter said they could bring home grades of "D" or worse without consequence. Few employers ask to see students' high school or college transcripts. With the exception of our most selective colleges and universities, our post secondary educational institutions are willing to accept virtually any applicant with a high school diploma regardless of his or her scholastic record (1997, p. H-2).

Perhaps their peer group spoke more clearly to these students than we did. Getting by and passivity were unique in our class, however. These two low grades were exceptional in this class.

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) evaluated the high school during the fall. Its preliminary findings delivered the following October stated that the middle students were not challenged in the high school. Advanced students were; Special Education students were, but those in the middle were underchallenged. The Humanities students were those middle students. We had given students chances to try transformations throughout the year. Their last transformation had been a group project of taking a Classical, Romantic, and Modern work and asking student to show what the poem looked like to them. We had chosen visual works like Swift's "Modest Proposal," Blake's "London," Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey," cummings' "In Just Spring...," and Yeats' "The Second Coming." As the students had translated words into images and presented them to the others in the class, they had "transformed" poetry into visual imagery. Whatever the reason, a generation's values, or senioritis, these students remained indifferent to proddings, encouragement, and low grades for the three quarters prior.

Collaborating on Goals and Standards

This summary describes Mr. Parsons's and my process of arriving at just one grade over the period of two days for two people. We had interviews with four others that day and in the two days following. In our classroom, assessment was an ongoing process, among teachers and students, almost inseparable from teaching and learning.

Mr. Parsons and I could articulate our standards by the end of the year in our assignments. We generally would have agreed about the letter grade given to each student. (See Appendix H Student Grades and Evaluation Comments). An A was an exceptional project with connections and elaborations, going beyond the requirements, a B was proficient, it fulfilled all components of the assignment and was adequately done, A C had some missing elements and was inaccurate or incomplete, A D was not adequate and was missing many elements; an F was generally a missing assignment. The standards were clear enough so that our students could grade themselves by these standards, though they were often more severe on themselves than we were. In the next chapter are samples of student work, their grades and our grades.

We retained some traditional elements in the class even at the end of the year. The unit exam was eliminated for the last quarter. We never presented information to the students through lectures. There were no universal texts. Although our grading system had evolved from the traditional one during the year, we still gave traditional unit tests until the last quarter. Even though we wanted the students to construct their understanding of an era, we found that we had to give formal tests given on a specific day, with fill-ins, multiple choice, matching, and short essays. Without this ritual, students felt that they weren't learning anything. Essays or projects were not a

substitute for tests for them, and perhaps also for Mr. Parsons. As a college teacher all of my final exams were papers, though I understood that "tests" were real and projects were not official for these students. Just as we had compromised and left space for a traditional grading system with the "not yets," we felt that we needed students to "take tests," even though they were open book, so that they would see for themselves that they had learned a great deal. However, what happened to our juniors may be an indication that even that tradition was disbanded for half the class.

Our two seniors, however, were the only students who seemed to have left the class untouched by it. Still, we had tried to remain positive with them even during that very strained final conference. We tried to make each conference a chance for students to improve. Shavelson recommends that teachers try to achieve symmetry between teaching and testing. That is, a good assessment makes a good teaching activity, and a good teaching activity makes a good assessment (1992). When assessment changes from grading or finding errors to conversation and coaching students, the culture of the classroom changes for teachers and students. This change of perspective changes assessment from a method of ranking students to "a continuum of continuous progress, and assessment helps place a student along that continuum.... Assessment tells you where you are in the journey and what you need to do next, not how good a student you are" (Sapier, 1997, p. 480).

When we changed the grading system to allow for further revision instead of giving a summative grade, most of the students wanted the choice of taking their C or D and not doing any more work. They resisted the "next" step. In the same way, when students are asked to be authentic and construct their own knowledge, they often

resisted and asked us what *we* really wanted. Perhaps they were not ready. Gwen's story in the next chapter show that she wanted to be independent, but when asked to be didn't understand. Although students may have complained about the inflexibility of traditional courses and the boredom of listening to lectures in other courses, in a more traditional classroom there was a secure path: the teacher and textbook told the student what was important, the student learned it, the student was rewarded for his or her work. The alternative, although it sounds more active and engaging, is also more challenging. There are no answers. If there are no answers, students have to have confidence that they will be able to put their ideas together. They have to be able to feel secure in the face of their not knowing. Perhaps Carrie's label of "vague" was a description less of our question than of the possible responses.

Our assessments and conferences were ongoing, but were different from tests. Goodlad's study revealed that 80% of traditional classes consisted of "ongoing oral tests" (1984). Although much of our talk with our students began with: "How are you doing on your...project, game, presentation, puppet show, etc." I am calling this an assessment, more specifically, a request for self-assessment. But it was not a quiz. The questions were to offer assistance, prodding, applause, feedback, or whatever was necessary to facilitate each student's learning. We were not checking on their knowledge of the facts. We were asking students how they were doing less as judges and more as mentors. Still, we remained judges.

We found students were more engaged when the question was about them and their progress than they would have been if we had asked them about, for example, a flying buttress. Yet some students resisted, were indifferent, or lacked motivation.

What could or should we have done to engage these students in their own growth? In a conversation about what Herb Kohl terms "not learners," he states: "Teachers seem to think that they are facing more and more kids who fail. I'm trying to say, No, you are facing more and more kids who are refusing to learn the kinds of things your are teaching" (1997, p. 14). According to a study of dropouts by Edwin Farrel, students distinguished interesting from boring based on the process not the content of the class. Boring classes had ongoing tests for students; they were classes in which students felt that they were being "judged, and most likely would be found wanting. They were reminded—in the teacher's routines, comments, and grades on their papers—of the likelihood of continued failure" (Steinberg, 1996b, p. 10). Classes that engaged students most, used a variety of materials and teachers gave positive feedback. Rewards like pizza parties did not work (Steinberg, 1997, p. 10). Perhaps, despite all of our efforts to the contrary to provide a positive atmosphere, we had not effectively communicated to these two seniors. We used a variety of materials, gave positive feedback, and tried to give students choices, but neither Scot nor Carrie was a contributing part of it.

According to Sapier (1997, p. 463), the following are the characteristics of good assessment systems in a classroom:

Good Assessments	Our Assessments
• They are based on significant and deliberate learning objectives	• We developed clearer objectives unit by unit.
• They provide crystal-clear criteria for success, with good models of what it	• We had no models since it was our first time teaching the class, though by the

looks like, at the beginning of instruction	end of the year we had models for each component of our self-designed project. Perhaps this made our assignments "vague" for some students
• They use tasks that approach or simulate real-life experiences when possible	• We had only a few real life experiences: designing a playbill, and acting as a docent in a museum
• They involve students intimately in self-assessment, collaborative critique, and goal setting.	• The students did self-assessments, quarterly goal setting, and peer reviews
• They use multiple means of gathering data	• Assessments were based on many modalities: performance, discussion, writing, visualizing, etc.
• Good records are kept	• We maintained grades and kept all of the students' work in individual portfolios and a hanging file in the classroom
• Assessments meet the criteria of technical soundness	• We tested what we taught in an environment like the classroom. To that degree the test was valid. Our estimates of grades were generally within the same grade letter, rarely did we vary more than 10 points, for example from an A to a B. More likely we would vary three or four points, A and A- or A- to a B+. To that very limited degree we gave reliable tests.

Our assessments met many of the criteria of good assessments, though because this was a new course for both of us and we were without a text, we were at a decided disadvantage. We came to the course with very different academic backgrounds. The courses that I had taught in college (writing and literature courses) were, by definition, very verbal in content and assessment. His choral coaching was, again by definition, not verbal, but performance-based. We had no common experience, no curriculum, and no text from which we could have started. Whatever unit we did, for example, on the Medieval era, we had to find resources and decide where we would go with them and what our final goals were. Yet, that limitation did not keep us from experimentation; perhaps it made experimentation easier. Bloom et al. have found that mixed-purpose assessment does not work well, for example when assessment is used both for feedback and for grading. They found that dual purposes shortchanged one of the purposes for the other because each purpose has a different design demand (as cited by Sapier, 1997, p. 463). Thus assessment for grades requires a different design than assessment for giving feedback. Perhaps this duality is reflected in the conflict that teachers feel between mentoring and grading. As the year went on, we dedicated more time to coaching and peer review so that more of the assessment was in the form of feedback with the purpose of supporting and encouraging student learning.

CHAPTER IV

EXTERNAL ASSESSMENTS

This chapter evaluates the course using external standards. After the course ended, Mr. Parsons and I assessed the course's alignment with the goals and standards of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the Common Core of Learning and considered the relationship of our goals and standards to those of the state, parents in Auburn, and other teachers in the community.

> *Teaching humanities is a wonderful chance to go back to how we originally learn, how we still learn. But we forget. It's not the drudgery of education. It's the eureka of education.*
>
> Elizabeth Johnson, former Humanities teacher (interview, June 19, 1997).

The Impact of External Factors

Because the Humanities class was the first for either of us, we used others' goals and the local school's expectations as starting points. Mr. Parsons and I had inherited a tradition and expectations from the former teachers and from the students who signed up for the class. Mrs. Johnson's enthusiasm, the "eureka" of education, and her creativity, as well as Mrs. Donelly's concern for the diverse needs of students helped to shape the institution's goals and standards for our course. These expectations had a direct impact on our goals and standards.

As we prepared, taught, and evaluated each class, and as our students assessed themselves and their needs from the course, our collective and individual goals, standards, and needs were not always definitive or clear, nor were they immutable. Our goals standards and needs were most clearly defined by our assignments and classes.

At the beginning of the course, the expectations of the high school and the coursework of the prior teachers played a major role in defining our goals and standards.

The Impact of External Standards

My co-teacher and I had never met until we began teaching together although we had spoken over the phone. We were both newcomers to Auburn Public Schools. Auburn's Humanities course had been considered unique by the students, teachers, and administrators of Auburn. We had been given the freedom by everyone (principal, department heads, and former teachers) to develop our own course. At first that had been disorienting because there were no texts and no curriculum. We had five copies each of a few art or music books and we could borrow copies of some literary selections from the English Department. In addition, we had ten Units from the earlier Humanities teams, for example, Ancient Greece, Learning Styles, the Medieval Era, to shuffle through. As described in Chapters I and III, both of us brought experience with performance-based assessment to the class. As a teacher I had taught high school English for ten years, reading for seven, and college English and literature for the previous seven. In my undergraduate college English and literature courses, I had worked extensively with portfolios, a performance-based assessment, and had dedicated much class time to group work, conferences, and revision. I had also directed writing and learning center for the school and had trained professionals and students to mentor and tutor students in their writing. Mr. Parsons had taught one year of high school chorus and music and three years of elementary music before he began at Auburn. He was also a choirmaster and had coached singers throughout his career as they prepared for performances.

Both of us were student-centered, often worrying about a particular student's progress or absences, also celebrating every step forward. I had held individual conferences with students about their writing and about literature; he coached students individually for performances. We had both taught in teams before. We collaborated on each day's class based on what we assessed the students needed to learn. We balanced our assignments between needs of the students and the requirements of the course. In a typical planning session we graded, planned, celebrated student progress, solved the most pressing problems, for example, how we could keep the seniors on track during their last three weeks of school. (See Appendix I for the entire transcript and my coded comments on an assessment discussion.)

Our planning session took place during the hour before class when the class was working on their self-designed project. In one particular session, Mr. Parsons was grading a stack of playbills, and I was organizing the final self-assessment. The topics covered include our evaluations of the course and several of our students. We also graded a group project. We organized the schedule and the content of the exit conferences. This conversation was part of a typical, somewhat chaotic, pre-class discussion. In the background students were assembling materials to display the Humanities class work in an art show.

Although we shared standards, they were flexible. We had negotiated a special assignment for two students who had gone on a trip and who had been unable to participate in the filming of their puppet show (Appendix J), a Victorian Cinderella. We had asked each to research the Cinderella fairy tale, select two other versions from other cultures or eras and compare and contrast them. We felt that this assignment

might be accomplished on a vacation and would give the students some of the insights they might have missed by watching other groups' puppet shows. Our flexibility is also evident in our exceptions for three students who had difficulty settling on a play. One of the students was not a native English speaking student and the group insisted that they find a play with language that he understood easily. Mr. Parsons had given them a special place to rehearse and had allowed them to miss one day of the other groups' performances so that they could finish their own editing and rehearsal. We had decided that experience with Dani, Sarah, and Ryan's sock puppet show had been a success on many levels. The puppet show (See Appendix J for general assignment) about AIDS and homosexuality had been dramatic and effective. Dani's character's words had been edited so that he and the class could understand the ideas. A few students had shed some tears at the end of the play when the main character died of AIDS. This group of students had used very simple sock puppets, but their conviction made the play effective.

This discussion took place in May when we had begun to see success in the class with specific students. By this time students who had not been motivated were working (Mary Ellen) and students who were not generally motivated and who cut classes had maintained excellent attendance in our class. (Ryan had missed only one class all year, but we found out that ours was an exception.) In addition, Dani, an international student from Switzerland, had reached our standard of being connected to his work and of developing a voice. Four times during the conversation we recognized different student's successes. As I reviewed the data I began to label these moments as teacher celebrations. We enjoyed seeing our students attain our standards. We also

began to celebrate our own success twice when we compared our class with other classes.

Our goals had become clear to both of us. We felt we had attained our goals and had determined student by student the meaning of high standards. Working hard (Mary Ellen), connecting to ideas (Dani), enjoying the course (Ryan's attendance), attaining a high level of written work (mature, clear, well developed, creative), and collaborating and cooperating in group work (supportive, goal oriented, well-performed), were goals and standards mentioned in this short discussion.

We set clearly stated goals for our students, giving them an opportunity to assess and revise their work before the assignment was finished. We collaborated during that discussion and developed a schedule for conferences with seniors, a scale for self-evaluation, and a checklist for students to evaluate their work during the days before our exit interview. Mr. Parsons had said that it needed to be clear and focused when he said: "I think if you can use a few key words."

This helped me. I realized I should: "Take the original assignment and change it around and let them self-assess it." I developed a checklist (Appendix G Self-evaluation/Final Conference) which they were to bring to their final conference. They were to grade themselves on the following components of the project:

- Research
- Reflection
- Formal Writing
- Creative Writing
- Transformation

- Comparison/Contrast
- Daily Work
- Project as a Whole
- Other: (growth, motivation, helping others)

In addition, they were to explain their justification for the grades. We also asked students to evaluate what they had learned in the course.

The grades were based upon a simple generic rubric, a compromise between traditional grades and rubrics.

- Advanced (A) work was exceptional; they had gone beyond the assignment. Their information was complete, accurate, and well organized.
- Proficient (B) work meant that all of the requirements were completed. The information was mostly complete, accurate, and well organized.
- Average (C) work was when most of the requirements were met, but there may have been some missing elements or some inaccuracies.
- A great deal of incomplete, inaccurate, or missing work (D) indicated that all of the requirements were not met.
- We gave Fs only when students had not attempted the assignment.

Just as Mr. Parsons and I had developed an understanding of the meaning of these words, so had our students. Yet, because we were creating these assignments from scratch, we had no models of different levels of work. What we did have, was the shared experience of all of the students, each of whom had researched, written

reflections, done transformations, etc., before. They had already completed projects in each category; they had received grades and comments with each. We had developed a communal understanding of our class standards. However, the next year would be easier if we had given students models. I had tried to use rubrics alone as feedback with a set of papers. Students insisted that grades be given along with the categories, although we used the rubrics during the time that students were doing their projects to give feedback. We had discussed the project grades many times and finally compromised so that there were grades and words. I liked the words when they were attached to ways of doing the assignment and the kind of work attached to a letter or number. I liked saying work was proficient instead of giving it a B. I wanted to use only rubrics, but Mr. Parsons had said that the students would translate them into numbers anyway. At least they had advanced and proficient connected to A and B, certainly a movement in the right direction, I thought.

After almost thirty years of "grading" papers, I wondered why this process always felt wrong. I had to give grades because the system insisted on it. When I had experimented with checks and check plusses or pass/fails, I found that students wanted to have their papers further differentiated into five categories. "But is this a high pass or an average pass?" I can remember a student saying. I tried to connect these numbers or letters or words with something meaningful for students so that they knew what to do next time to receive a higher grade or so that they knew what they had attained. However, as my story of Cara so poignantly shows, even excellent grades and words of praise, do not necessarily communicate what a teacher anticipates they will.

Fortunately, when students evaluated themselves, they did connect the letters or

ranks with their own work, not just a distant, numerical scale. Student self-evaluations are discussed more fully in the next chapter.

The Common Chapters

After the course was over we discussed the alignment of our course with the Arts and English/Language Arts Frameworks and the Common Core of Learning. In the following chart is a summary of what we thought about the goals of the Common Chapters.

Table 3

Table Assessing Our Alignment with the Goals of The Common Chapters

The Common Chapters: Eight Goals for Instruction	Our Self-Assessment
• All students are held to high expectations and standards	• We felt we had high expectations that we had developed, but felt that we had not held all students to them. We both wondered what the standards were.
• Students learn using a variety of strategies and approaches	• We were both sure we had used music, art, discussion, writing, performance, etc., to help students learn.
• Students explore how knowledge has purpose and meaning in their lives	• We tried to connect learning to the students and asked them during each unit to make these connections by asking them to imagine they had written an opera for an eighteenth

	century audience, or by asking them to select the era in which they would most like to live. Some students had not made these connections by the end of the year, though most had.
• Purposeful interaction is a vital ingredient to student learning	• We were confident that students had ample opportunities for interaction and learning with peers and with teachers. Almost all of our class time was devoted to group work, conferences, performances, and presentations.
• Curriculum is based in inquiry, problem-solving, discovery, and application of key issues and concepts	• We developed our tasks so that students could construct their own knowledge. (See Appendix D Final Self-Designed Project.)
• Assessment is both a process and a tool to improve instruction and enhance student learning	• Chapter III discusses the way in which we used assessment as a process and tool
• Curriculum points to the connections within and across disciplines	• Art, literature, and music were the three major strands of the course
• Technology provides important tools for enriching the learning process (Massachusetts Curriculum Framework,	• We had limited access to technology within the class, though students did use the Internet for the final project.

The Common Chapters, (1993, p. 8).	

Technology, we decided, was not as available as we would have liked. Our classroom computer had been removed; the Internet had only been available for three months as of 1997. However, we were surprised that our course had at least met the expectations of the Common Core. Yet we could not decide whether or not we had high standards since I found no sample of standards in all of my research. We had tried to have our students do their best work, but that was as far as we could define standards. Mr. Parsons and I also looked at and evaluated strand by strand how well our class met or did not meet the standards of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (Appendix K).

The Arts Frameworks

The Arts Frameworks is brief and has only three categories.

> ***I. Lifelong learners can create new works or dance, music, theater, or visual arts, as well as recreate and reinterpret existing works through performance.***

Both Mr. Parsons and I gave our course an advanced rating (4), by which we meant that students were given opportunities throughout the year to create, recreate, and reinterpret ideas through performance. Students had written poems, put on skits and puppet shows, drawn interpretations of music, had transformed works of art into other forms (plays to poetry, research to folk song), translated works of art into contemporary forms (contemporary Everyman) throughout the year.

> *II. Lifelong learners enjoy and find insights in the arts as audience members,*

viewers, and consumers. Their ability to understand and make perceptive judgments about artworks grows with experience.

Again, we gave the course high scores. I gave it a 4, Mr. Parsons a 3, proficient. We felt that many of our activities exposed students to the arts, asked them to reflect on their experiences, and supported their growth in making judgments. They had gone to a professional theatrical performance, and had been performers, evaluators, and audience at many of their own. Mr. Parsons had felt that their ability to make judgments about music was still not very good, so he gave the course a lower grade. We felt we would have included more peer evaluation than we had.

In the final category, Mr. Parsons gave the class a 2, incomplete:

III. Lifelong learners understand the importance of the arts in past and present societies and contribute to the communities through the arts.

Because Mr. Parsons had taught other arts courses, he had higher standards for the second half of the standard, contribution to the community. We did exhibit our work at the annual art show at the high school. But, Mr. Parsons pointed out that the class was more performance than product-based and that for the K-12 Arts Festival, we should have done skits or had students act as docents for our exhibit. As an English teacher whose students would not necessarily ever perform publicly, I felt this one contribution was adequate and had given it a 3. Mr. Parsons, as a professional performer, saw this as less sufficient. After our discussion we decided the students would benefit from presenting the next year.

The specific numbers are not as important as the discussion that the arts standards initiated between the two of us. We began to plan for the next year, satisfied that the Creative Arts Framework standards had been fairly well met. We certainly wanted to raise our standards in each category, and perhaps get our students to work more specifically for the arts show and perhaps even present their work there themselves, not just post their work.

The English/Language Arts Frameworks

The English/Language Arts Frameworks have 28 Standards. Mr. Parsons and I addressed each. Our ranks are listed in the Appendix K. I will not address each, but will address the Strands, the more general areas: Language, Literature, Composition, and the Media. In general my standards or expectations as the "English" teacher were higher, and I felt that we had not moved students along as far in any area as we might have. It should be noted that the English/Language Arts standards describe what students can do (performances) more than what they should know. For example, the first Strand for all grades K-12 is:

Use agreed-upon rules for informal and formal discussions in small and large groups.
The 11th and 12th grade examples are:
Use professional guidelines to evaluate others' discussions. Generate rubrics in class.

The Frameworks include activities and their examples for grade levels indicate with examples the level of performance for the particular strand. However, there are no specified levels of performance for the discussions indicated in the Frameworks.

Because the English Strands were so specific, Mr. Parsons and I agreed to rank each strand with numbers as well as discuss each. A 4 indicated that we included these activities and worked close to the level of the examples given in the Framework. A 3 meant that we adequately covered the strand. A 2 indicated that we did not feel that we were at the level indicated. A 1 meant that we were below the level indicated.

Language, the first strand, included the areas of oral language and mechanics: group work, presentations, vocabulary, language conventions, and linguistics. My average score was a 3.1, although I gave group work and presentations 4's, the mechanics of language had not been as thoroughly addressed as in a typical English class which had only reading and writing as its focus. By adding the arts, history, and music, we spent less time on language. Mr. Parsons's average score was slightly higher, a 3.4, since he felt that we did spend a great deal of time on group work and presentations, unlike what he would have expected in a music theory course. My average score for literature was 2.3 since we did so much less reading than we would have in a traditional English class. The students saw stage productions and movies and performed plays but were not engaged with literature as much of the time as I would have liked. Mr. Parsons gave this area a 3.2 since we did spend a great deal of time on literature (probably more than a third) when the course was supposed to be a balance of art, literature, and music. I gave the course mainly 3's on composition. Students wrote frequently. Both of us gave revision a 2, since it was a struggle to move our students to revise even with our Not Yets. Revision is an area that the entire system, parents and English teachers alike, feels is a weak area.

A major concern in the English Frameworks that we had planned to address

more completely but were not able to because we did not have sufficient time, was the multicultural standard. We both gave the course a 2. We had planned during the third quarter, to connect the Western arts with other cultures. Each unit took us much longer than we had anticipated. Although two students did do individual projects on other cultures, Japan and Korea, we felt that we had done little to give students a world view rather than a Western view. We planned to make world connections the following year by beginning the course with an international time line that included the rest of the world and their histories. The learning styles unit could have been more completely integrated into students' understanding of their own and other individual artists' and cultures' unique features. I felt in this community which had little ethnic diversity that we had left out an important understanding of differences among people and their contribution to a class, group, or society..

We gave our use of the media adequate scores, 2.3 and 3.0, because our students had videotaped projects, researched on the Internet, taped music and concerts, and had used computer graphics for some of the playbills. However, the level of sophistication of the work was not on the level specified by the Framework examples.

We had tried to balance both English and Arts responsibilities. We thought that we could do better in all areas. By the end of the year we had developed many successful units and had experienced some problems. We had determined our goals and standards but only after having actually taught the course through an entire year. Mr. Parsons decided to take some music history courses during the summer as he began to get his master's degree. He had also started to plan a cross-cultural project for the next year. He was looking forward to working with his new team of English

teachers for the course for next year and to spend the first month "really defining, one at a time what each of our goals is."

The other two-member team had similar assessments about their first experience teaching this class. The English teacher felt she hadn't done enough reading or revision. The Arts teacher felt that students had begun to make connections, but that some students needed more structure, others less. This had been their first experience in teaching this course as well. Their classes had taken different paths, but had maintained similar kinds of activities. They had puppet shows, a castle-building "contest," many performances and presentations, with group work the usual classroom method interspersed with some traditional teacher-directed activities. Their class had a preponderance of performers who wanted unstructured assignments. One of their senior's final projects was a series of original songs, satires, ballads, and rock songs, in which he retold the class' march (with the refrain a march) through the centuries. However, Miss Riley recognized the students' conflict between dependence and freedom: "At exactly the same time I had one student say there wasn't enough structure, another said there was too much" (Interview June 13). Their class had become somewhat polarized into a pro-structure group of traditionalists and a no-structure group of artists and performers.

The other team felt that late papers and a lack of structure were major problems for them. And with "Kids that passed, but didn't get it" (June 13). Mr. Parsons and I had also been concerned about the lack of concern about homework and incomplete work from a few students. We wondered if structured classes had eliminated that problem. Mediocrity and lack of reading seemed to be a pervasive problem, at least

according the Mr. Prouty and his English Department in their self-assessment. "Not getting it" was another problem clearly in evidence with Scot and Carrie.

Both teams also talked frequently, and generally we shared our concern about what we would do next. Sometimes we shared our successes. We often shared assignments, though neither team ever gave exactly the same assignment.

The Sources of Our Goals and Standards

I was very familiar with the drafts of the Massachusetts English Language Arts Framework, the Arts Framework and the Common Core of Learning as I began the course. The Arts Framework that we had addressed had been based on national standards and was conceptually designed with its very general goals for the arts, though it gave no samples or examples. The English Language frameworks had been redesigned by the new Silber Board of Education. The final draft had been released during this study. The revision had eliminated study skills, a loss that I regretted because an awareness of the process of learning and of learning styles is invaluable for both teachers and students. Instead, the English Language Arts Frameworks added little in terms of reading and writing, but had changed the way that a class would learn reading and writing. Group work, presentations, performance-based learning, and the media were essential parts of the new curriculum. The Frameworks shifted away from the study of information or the acquisition of skills, for example, knowledge of the parts of speech, toward active engagement in its descriptions, for example, using the knowledge to revise compositions. Mastery was not a part of its conceptualization. Instead each strand began with Kindergarten and continued through grade 12 with increasingly higher levels of performance articulated in the Frameworks through

examples for grades 4, 8, 10 and 12. These new performances required that students be evaluated with task analyses, and rubrics, rather than being tested with objective tests. Students would be expected to participate in group discussions, but by grade twelve the example cited required that students needed to use the rules of discussion critically, by, for example, studying Robert's Rules and evaluating the discussion at a town meeting. The examples gave an indication of the level of expectation for students. However, there were no samples of student work, of writing, never mind of critical evaluations of Robert's Rules of Order.

Knowledge and dissemination of these ideas was an important part of my job. Still, as I taught the course, the immediate needs of students were more important to me than the external standards. I also began to understand how different the Frameworks were from curriculum. Essentially, the frameworks required reading, writing, performing, but the choices of what we read or wrote about were very flexible. The English Language Arts Frameworks had a recommended reading list that might have been found in an AP English class. Our course included some of the world and classic authors, like Shakespeare, or Goethe, since it was a survey course. Many of these texts have disappeared from many high school classrooms except in AP classes. The classic texts have been replaced by more contemporary works and by adolescent fiction. The results were generally positive from our limited experiences with the students with these classic texts. For some students in our class the language was a barrier to their understanding. We worked with students to translate the ideas into contemporary language and situations. Students rewrote, for example, J.B., a contemporary Book of Job, as a puppet show (Appendix J) and presented it to the class.

I have described the resistance that took place in this Humanities classroom to project-based learning and rubrics from the students. I realized that teachers might have greater reservations about having students construct their own knowledge in groups and presentations instead of sitting quietly and passively as they listened to the information clearly organized for them by their textbooks and their teachers. They might also be hesitant about teaching these classical works to students who just "get by."

For Mr. Parsons and me, state and national standards were never a part of our conversation. We had standards, our professional ones as English or arts educators, and we evaluated our students' growth based on them. However, the influence of external standards had little direct influence on our work, partially because the English and Language Arts Frameworks had not been passed until a month before I began this study. If I had begun teaching the course with the Frameworks in hand, I can't be sure I would have done anything differently. The writing and reading standards still do not exist in benchmarks and models. On the other hand, I think the local influences shaped our sense of freedom and experimentation profoundly.

Local Evaluations: Other Teachers

The history of the course and our immediate context of Auburn High School had more of an impact on our teaching than external standards. We used materials from the preceding year initially. After we understood the resources and the expectations of the departments, beginning second quarter, we created our own units. The English Department required a documented research paper. We were given a list of possible readings. However, I often discussed alternative readings and had them approved by

the head of the English Department. The Arts Department had evaluated their K-12 curriculum in relationship to the Massachusetts standards. Mrs. Johnson, one of the former teachers had been the head of that department, and Mr. Palmetto had been a member of the evaluation team. He was the head of the department during the year that he taught the course with us for the first time. The English/Language Arts Frameworks had not had a direct impact on the English curriculum since it had been accepted by the Massachusetts Board of Education in January of 1997. However, Mrs. Donelly, the other teacher with Mrs. Johnson, had been the chair of the English/Language Arts study groups and was aware of the direction of the English frameworks, although in its earlier versions. The course was probably the most extreme example of a learning-centered course in the high school with its emphasis on interdisciplinary units, performances, and student-generated timelines. Although other courses occasionally used performance, Miss Riley said, for example in her classes: "We do lots of group work and performances [in English classes], but not as much. They [the students] are sitting in their rows and they are structured that way some of the time" (Interview, June 13, 1997).

After the course was over, we discussed the course, our goals and standards, as well as directions for the next year. A perception that I found surprising is that one of the former teachers, Mrs. Johnson, some students, and both Mr. Palmetto and Miss Riley compared the course to an elementary course. Mr. Parsons said that one of their best students would be a "great elementary teacher" (1997) because she had been so creative and had taken the course twice. Initially, I thought that this meant that the course was too easy or perhaps a frill, but Mrs. Johnson, who had taught the course,

had been the Music and Arts Supervisor, and was now an elementary principal, reflected on the course:

> As a principal I see it [the kind of teaching done in Humanities] as good teaching. Most teaching at a lower [grade] level is more like Humanities. At a high school level where people are really into the verbal skills, the course is really a throwback. Kids come into this class with this glee in their eyes and say: "Oh good! We're going to have some fun. It's a wonderful chance to go back to how we originally learn, how we still learn. But we forget. It's not the drudgery of education. It's the *eureka* of education" [italics added for emphasis] (Interview, June 19, 1997).

I then understood that elementary meant interdisciplinary, creativity, fun, and the discovery method. In Auburn, the high school, particularly, was very traditional with lectures and tests the essence of many courses. The Auburn elementary schools and the middle school interdisciplinary teams had moved away from the text, lecture, and textbook tradition. I was disappointed that this class, which I considered good teaching at any level was somehow less than or different from what should take place in the high school. Galas in "Arts as Epistemology: Enabling Children to Know What They Know" comments on this evolution in American schooling:

> Before they begin school, and even in the primary grades, most children depend on play, movement, song, dramatic play, and artistic activity as their means of making sense of the world. That these pastimes gradually give way to predominantly "adult" styles of communication is more a tribute to the power of traditional schooling and parental pressure than a statement of the natural

process of expressive maturation (1995, p. 21).

From these comments, I began to understand more clearly the resistance that I had felt from the students. I had realized that the course was somewhat different from others because it was interdisciplinary and team taught, but I had not realized how much of a change this course had been for our students.

New England Association of Schools and Colleges

The high school was in the process of a self-evaluation for its New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) evaluation in October 1997. I knew that I would have a great deal of work to do in the years to come to bring more active engagement to the classes. NEASC's preliminary report was delivered on October 22, 1997, to the high school faculty and district administration. The committee made up of teachers and administrators from Massachusetts commended the high school for its caring about its students. However, the committee questioned if the middle level students, those not in honors, were adequately challenged. They also recommended that the high school's assessment techniques become more systematic and related more directly to the Curriculum Frameworks. NEASC also recommended that each department begin to develop a formal, structured, curriculum revision which included strategies for teaching, refined goals, and "adherence to state standards."

I knew that I was going to be responsible for helping the staff discover these strategies for teaching and for defining goals and standards. I also knew that I would have to work with the faculty with a deep appreciation of the fact that these strategies, goals, and standards was far more of a profound change than the words indicated. It

was a change in culture. Our Humanities course was one of those courses for students in the middle. The goals and standards of the course were clearly not articulated in a curriculum guide. The only formalized requirement from the English Department was that our students do a research paper. We had fought mediocrity with Scot and Carrie. I had not realized that it was a pervasive fight.

The High School English Department

The High School English Department evaluated the English/Language Arts curriculum and its alignment to the twenty-eight specific strands of the curriculum frameworks during the summer following this course (1997, Assessment of Auburn performance in English/Language Arts). The English teachers recognized their strengths in literature, theme-based units, interdisciplinary study, active participation in performances, group work, and active learning. However, they were concerned about the "skills" of grammar, and vocabulary described in the frameworks since their teaching was based more on practice than on skills. They saw revision of writing as an area in need of emphasis because "students are reluctant to revise." Also, they described some of their students as "passive learners" who were not yet comfortable with actively creating their own questions in inquiry-based instruction, nor were they reading at home for "leisure/pleasure." Their department's limited access to word processing and the Internet was a cause of concern with an underlying hope that word processing would facilitate revision and that the Internet would improve student's interest in research and creating their own questions. Their report echoed the language of Quality Counts when the English Department concluded that "students are capable of revision, but are often too easily satisfied by what we would consider 'adequate.' There is a

tendency to *rise to the level of mediocrity"* [italics added for emphasis] (Assessment of Auburn performance in English/Language Arts, p. 8). Again, as in the NEASC Report, the need for clearly articulated standards, beyond adequate and mediocre had been called for in Auburn.

The Art and Music Department Evaluation

In the winter of 1996, the Auburn K-12 Arts Department assessed their alignment with the Arts Frameworks and stated that the creative process "is the heart of arts education and provides a rationale for making the arts an indispensable element in the education of all students" (Auburn Arts Frameworks Alignment Report, 1996, p. 1) They determined that their curriculum had a multicultural and interdisciplinary focus which emphasized "the importance of nurturing a learner's capacity for exploring, making connections, developing discipline, and self knowledge." The teachers also acknowledged the arts' leadership in authentic assessment with its portfolios, projects, and performances. They stated that for the arts: "Assessment is not so much a test as an episode in learning" (Auburn Arts Frameworks Alignment Report, 1996, p. 6). Beyond general concepts there was no curriculum for the Arts, nor are standards clearly defined.

Parent Survey

According to national research, parent priorities include decent behavior, respect, and a mastery of the basics (Wolf, 1997). None of this reflects a concern for high standards. Though high standards in curriculum beyond the basics are not a stated priority, 71% of Americans said that higher standards would result in more attention to studies and learning more for students (Wolk et al., 1997, p. 34). Generally most

Americans are satisfied with their local schools. They think other people's schools are inadequate (Sommerfeld, 1997, p. 1). In addition, parents "love As and objective measurements" (Caine et al., 1997, p. 72).

In a 1997 survey of twelfth grade parents, which I developed with the Auburn Administrative Team, most parents (60%) agreed or strongly agreed their students had received an excellent education in the Auburn Schools. (See Appendix K.) This perception aligns with the national perception that parents perceive local schools as doing a good job. Further, most parents (90%) agreed or strongly agreed that students did not have excessive demands put on them (little homework). In response to questions specifically about assessment, parent conferences, and expectations, most parents strongly agreed or agreed (83%) that they had a clear picture of their child's progress from report cards and from parent conferences (70%). In addition, most agreed or strongly agreed (70%) that they understood teacher expectations for courses.

In response to questions specifically about English and Language Arts, most parents (65%) agreed or strongly agreed that their child's experiences in reading had been excellent; that oral language (55%) had been excellent; and that literature (85%) had been excellent. On the other hand, some parents felt that writing was not as strong as the other areas. Forty percent (40%) agreed or strongly agreed that writing was excellent, but the majority (55%) disagreed or strongly disagreed. All of the comments, even the positive ones, about writing indicated that more feedback, revision and group work were necessary (See Appendices K and L for Parent Survey and Data Analysis).

For parents, Auburn High School's strengths are in reading and literature, subjects which have been the traditional English curriculum. Traditionally, grammar,

not writing, was the mainstay of the writing curriculum before process writing had been incorporated into the Auburn High School Curriculum in the 1970's. The comments about writing reflected a concern by some parents that their students had not received a great deal of practice in research, group work, feedback, or revision. Parents saw writing and homework as weaknesses, though their attitude toward the high school was extremely positive in most categories (Appendix L).

The Town of Auburn

In 1996, the Auburn Town Meeting supported many of the changes advocated in the Five Year plan, including hiring a Director of Curriculum and Faculty Development, my position, which began in September of 1996. However, a year later, the town meeting voted down a new building for the high school and cut $300,000 from the school budget. This lack of financial support reflects the Quality Counts assessment of the Massachusetts populace: generally communities do not support the schools financially. Played out on the town meeting floor, the majority of townspeople insisted that the basics were good enough for them and that change was not necessary. According to Robert Schwartz, a lecturer of Education at the Graduate School at Harvard, the momentum of education reform can only be sustained by communicating a "better understanding of the actual conditions of education" (Sommerfeld, 1997, p. 1). If high standards are necessary for success in the next century, it is essential that communities, teachers, and educators clearly understand the reasons. In Auburn, the community sees the basics as the priority and their schools as adequate.

The Question of Standards

Despite all of the verbiage about high standards, in what way can a teacher, a

high school, a state, or a country articulate them? The English Department was concerned about mediocrity; NEASC declared the middle students were underchallenged. First we must define standards, and then we need to work to move students to achieve them. Was the A from our Humanities class the same as for the second hour? Or for the course the year before? We could agree with one another that we had done justice to the Arts and English/Language Arts Frameworks, but to an 11th or 12th grade level? How could we know? We had created an environment, at least we thought we had, similar to that recommended by the Common Core or Learning, but to what standard?

What is the impact of Education Reform on the thinking and behavior of teachers who must translate them into a daily reality: from a curriculum, into a lesson plan, then into a class where 25 students arrive at Room 100 every day. There, in the face of diverse student needs, what can help them develop a clear set of goals and guidelines? These idealistic words, high standards, active engagement, become moving targets, a process, and a complex of behaviors, not translatable into a clear and simple step by step process. Some textbooks, teachers' manuals, and curricula were created supposedly as "teacher-proof," meaning learning would take place whatever the quality of the teacher. With this kind of textbook philosophy, if a district chose its materials carefully and wrote its curriculum clearly, no matter who stood at the front of the class, the curriculum would work. These old basal textbooks exist no longer. Without pacing schedules, teachers must construct their own curriculum every day. This is a formidable task, as this chapter demonstrates. Chapter VI discusses the implications of this study and of education reform more completely.

CHAPTER V

STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENTS

This chapter assesses the course from the perspective of the students. In their own words six students describe their misunderstandings, their reflections, the impact of assessment on their motivation, and their assessment of the course.

Students Reflecting on their Learning

In today's society, people make their own choices (kind of like our class this year). I have a hard time taking orders. I'm a very independent person and I like my freedom. I think that is why I am here at Auburn. Holy Name High had more rules than my own parents.... That is why I liked this class so much this year. I just was not prepared for what I was to expect. I say I love independence, and I do. I'm just restricted from it in all my other classes. For 11 years I have been taught to follow all the rules and do what I was told. So in this class when I was told to break all of the rules and do what I want, I was very lost...I want to thank both of you for making me a more open minded person and preparing me for the future. Sooner or later I will be off on my own with nobody to turn to. I'll need to make my own decisions.

Thank you,

Gwen

Studies about student opinions about school have found that student views were surprisingly consistent with current research. Students criticized teachers who depend on texts, lecture, routine, and rote learning for the majority of classwork. They praised

those exceptional teachers who cared and who were creative and interesting. Students reported liking group work and activities. Even students who achieve in school did not find grades helpful (Nieto, 1996, pp. 90-95). Students often report being bored and seeing little relevance in school. Poplin and Weeres found that students became "more disengaged as the curriculum, texts, and assignments became more standardized" (as cited by Nieto, pp. 83-84).

Yet, Gwen's reaction to a course that was not text or lecture based was not as clear-cut and positive as one might think or hope. Gwen articulated her difficulty with our less traditional expectations. She had rebelled against the many "rules" in other classes. Our assignments asked her to break those rules. Ironically, the freedom that she thought she wanted made her feel "lost" not free or independent. Traditional education for Gwen had rules and information, and it took away her independence. But the teacher and text provided the structure and defined for her clearly what was important and what was to be done. In our class, she had to define what she thought was important. In the same paper, Gwen had said: "I have learned as much in this class as in any other English class, but the difference is I'll never forget what I learned here. The things I learned will stick with me." Gwen had struggled with her final project but had learned something about the connection between her own life (her planned trip to Switzerland) and school (a project on the artists of Europe and Switzerland).

Just as Gwen said that she didn't recognize that she was getting the kind of freedom in education that she had asked for, how often do we misunderstand or simply not recognize the intentions of a course? It is with the perspective that Gwen so aptly

stated that I look at the goals, standards and needs of students. Even when we are meeting needs, teachers and students alike, may not recognize or appreciate the fact. Needs, goals, and standards are not necessarily clear, nor are they always what we say, nor are they static. Learning may not even take effect until years later.

Finally, we are at the heart of education. How do we really know what students really want? Ironically there is little research on students and education reform. In a conversation on the last day of school, Gwen said that she had never liked or done well in courses that required memorization. Yet, as we asked her to design her own project, she had not recognized that our class was giving her choices or freedom. She saw only a lack of direction.

Perhaps this conflict which Gwen experienced is reflected in Brynes' research that indicates that students learn passivity and compliance in school. They learn to refrain from questioning. The students expect as part of the regularity of teaching that the teacher will do most of the talking and if students listen politely, the class will go well. Students seldom ask questions and the questions asked are generally literal and based on the lecture or the text (Byrnes, 1997, pp. 144-146). Although Gwen resented her lack of choice and resented the rules, she had learned to be passive in school. Ira Shor calls this the "authority-dependence" of students. The teacher directs the class and holds all of the answers. Shor recommends breaking up this traditional teaching pattern with a variety of teaching roles: convener, facilitator, advocate, lecturer, mediator, recorder, librarian, counselor, etc. (as cited by Byrnes 144). Yet, if teachers change, do students automatically understand and respond positively to it? Students may say they do not want to sit passively, yet does that mean that when asked to engage in an

activity, to solve a problem, write a play, build a castle, that they will welcome that? Being engaged may be a more positive experience than being bored, but it requires effort on the student's part as well. This change in their role may be based on their own learning about the rules of the classroom. Their experience has taught them to be passive and compliant.

Mr. Parsons and I struggled to keep students engaged, but we had often been discouraged. Scot and Carrie never were truly engaged by the class based on their work and their comments.

To evaluate the needs, goals and standards of students we asked students to answer two questions in the final self-evaluation that they were to bring to their final conference. (See Appendix G.) They were asked to grade themselves on each task in the final project, to explain why they had given themselves these grades, and to discuss what they had learned from the class. We discussed the projects and these three questions in their final conference. The following fourteen students are described in the narrative. Appendix O.

Student	A Brief Profile
Scot	A "popular" senior whose project and final discussion about the Pieta showed little concern. He received a D.
Carrie	A "popular" senior who worked harder than Scot and worked with him on the Michelangelo project. She gave herself a 70.
Gwen	A junior who realizes that the class asked her to be independent, but that she had not realized or appreciated that our expectations were hers until the class was almost over. She traveled to Switzerland that summer. She received a B.
Jake	A "popular" senior who was often illogical. He received a D, but felt he deserved a B.
Mary Ellen	An unmotivated senior who became motivated by the end of the year.
Amy	A senior who worked hard on her AIDS project. She received an A.
Cate	A creative, motivated senior who thought a self designed project was a "dream." An A student.
Dani	An international student from Switzerland, who grappled with Henry VIII and

	Martin Luther, made some break throught, and ultimately wrote a poem and enjoyed taking risks. An A student. He did a puppet show with Ryan and Sarah.
Sally	A junior with a learning disability. She gained her voice with her discovery that Picasso was not a good man. She received her first A for the last quarter.
Ryan	A quiet senior who researched the Beat generation and wrote a "beat" song. He was an A student throughout the year, though he was frequently absent and considered unmotivated by many teachers.
Amie	A junior who had a difficult year in the course. Amie received a C.
Mark	A senior at the fringes who seems to have untapped ability. Mark received a D.
Jim	The only junior to receive a D. He researched the Ku Klux Klan.
Spencer	A junior who wrote about how he was in the Late Renaissance of his life. An A student.

Every student had said that they had, to quote Scot: "learned some stuff that I didn't know before." Scot's minimalist response reflected at least an increase in knowledge (stuff). Most (18 of 25) had said that they had learned to appreciate the visual and musical arts. And the majority of the students said that they had "changed" in what they could see or hear in a work of art. For example, Spencer said, "*I've grown education-wise cause before when I looked at a painting or heard music, I'd think, 'Hey, this is that,' but now I can categorize [into forms and eras]. I never knew that you could tell so much from one single piece of art...I also liked the way the class was laid back and fun. And the teachers were awesome.*"

Students gave themselves a range of grades. About half (12) gave themselves the same letter grades (See Appendix G the Self-evaluation/Final Conference) which Mr. Parsons and I gave them. Many (8) had given themselves a letter grade lower than we ultimately gave them. Two, Scot and Jim--two of the three D students, did not complete this form. The third D student was Jake. He was the only student whose grade was two letter grades different from ours. In addition, he was the only student

who thought that his grade should be higher than the grade we gave him. Jake had given himself almost all B's in each area. We ultimately gave him a D. He said: " I earned these grades because at each category I put down what I honestly think I earned."

Jake's logic was often puzzling. He said, using circular logic, that he "earned" the grades because he "put down" what he "honestly thought" he earned. Everyone else used words like *hard work, trying hard, spent a lot of time, learned a lot.* In all cases, whatever the grade the student gave him or herself, each associated the amount of work done with what they should receive as grade. Not a single student mentioned his or her talent or ability. Carrie said that she and Scot "did a good job on the project," but she gave herself a 70 for a quarter grade because she had missing elements. It is interesting to note that students were to check off letter grades for each section of their project. In the last box, they were to suggest the grade for the quarter. Most students wrote numbers rather than letters for their averages probably because Auburn's report cards are numerical. Jay did research on castles, labeled his castle as if it were in a museum display, and built a remarkable early castle with a moat and moving parts from Popsicle sticks. He gave himself As in all but reflection, formal writing, and comparison/contrast and said:

I think I have tried very hard for these grades. I have spent many hours on this project and have learned a great deal along with having fun building the castle.

Gwen, who was about to be an exchange student in Switzerland during the summer, did research on Swiss art. She had difficulty finding information at first. She gave herself mainly Bs except for two As in creative writing and daily work and a C in comparison

contrast, said:

> *I think I have earned these because I tried real hard. I didn't really care until I saw the art. I really enjoyed it. This project has helped more than I thought.*

Amy, who compared the plague to AIDS, gave herself all As except for a B on her reflection and creative writing. She said:

> *I think I earned these grades because I work very hard. I did a lot of research not just at the library and the Internet, but I went to Memorial Hospital to talk to doctors and did research in their library. I really learned a lot and had an experience I'll never forget.*

These responses despite the lack of specific detail beyond "learned a lot" reflect the students' sense of control and ownership of their success. When students lack this sense, they often become apathetic and discouraged.

The way that students look at the learning task and at themselves makes a difference in motivation. In her research, Dweck found that there were two ways in which students defined themselves as "smart," either they were incrementalists who put more effort into something when they don't understand or they were entity theorists who thought if they are smart then a task requires little effort and they make few mistakes. The former students planned strategies to overcome failures, and expressed confidence in their abilities. The latter defined themselves as failures when they reach a difficult problem and they predict poor future performance. Those who have a mastery pattern see challenges as chances to get smarter. The entity students seek out only tasks in which success seems probable (as cited by Steinberg, 1996b, p. 9). When the successful students of both types encountered difficulty, the mastery students

maintained their level of achievement, but the others did not. Ames suggests that: "In the long run it may be better for students to learn to view their mistakes--and the feedback that accompanies these--as sources of information for future efforts rather than as evidence of low ability" (as cited by Steinberg, 1997, p. 9).

Student Self-Evaluations

Based on this research, the students saw their work, time, and effort (or lack of it) not their ability, as the cause of their achievement. No student said that they did not do the creative section because they were not creative. We felt that the students had gained a sense of their own competence in the class because they had control over what they worked on. In addition, they were able to shape their own projects and to receive or seek out feedback as they were working. Feedback told them not what was wrong, but what was next.

The diversity of the responses to this complex final project was also an indication that students could rise to high standards and work independently. We had asked students to design their own question that related to the humanities. The initial response to this project was fear, enthusiasm, and confusion as described in Chapter V. Cate, the most enthusiastic student had written in a goal-setting statement just after we handed out the project:

> *This is my dream: we get to work for our last 5 weeks (for seniors) on whatever. We have individual meetings w/teachers so our topic and forum is cool, but we can do our thing.*

Cate created a multimedia project: Cate's View of the Art, Literature, and Music of the Twentieth Century. She wrote a journal as the guide to the tour in which she created

collages from newspapers, the Internet, taped parts of songs and television shows and catalogued her favorites to show that for her this century had great creativity (Kermit The Frog, her soulmate, a diversity of music, Saturday Night Live), joy, concern for people (My So-called Life), and the bizarre (Rocky Horror Picture Show). As the reader pages through her journal, she instructs them to turn on the audio or the video to see or hear snippets of her favorites, or to hear her dismiss the "pathetically individual" Spice Girls, a rock group. Her commentary is witty, creative, dismissive: " It [Saturday Night Live] is an American icon.... It was hysterical and cutting edge. It stunk. It was hysterical. It stunk...You get it." We had been concerned that Cate's enthusiasm would take her far afield and perhaps prevent her from finishing. Her final project was turned in on time, though her father had to deliver a tape to school for her. It was limited to her own life, but had enough research, creativity, comparison, to show her individualistic and deep understanding of music, art, the theater, television, and to critique the icons of the very recent modern era.

The assignment was not a "dream assignment" for all students. Cate was a risk taker who had so much that she wanted to say. Others did not begin the class hoping to be creative. Gwen wanted independence, but had not realized how much responsibility and risk was involved.

Research in cognition indicates that the best learning takes place when students experience low threat and high challenge. Caine and Caine call this state "relaxed alertness" and warn against the use of rewards as well as punishments because they interfere with motivation, and creativity and reduce the likelihood of meaningful learning. Based on Scardamalia and Bereiter's research the Caines recommend using

wonderment questions based on deep interests of the students or a desire to make sense of the world (1997, p. 123). Yet, by our creating these bigger questions we had also created "dissonance" which provokes anxiety. Incremental learning requires no risks. One step leads to the next. Each piece fits in neatly with the next. Creating an atmosphere that is conducive to taking risks, the Caines say, is the responsibility of the educator. "We reduce threat by creating an environment in which students are safe to try, think, speculate, and make mistakes on their way to excellence." This environment must recognize the importance of the emotional climate and the affective domain. Finally, this place needs to have a sense of "coherence and orderliness," a sense of regularity and community acceptance (pp. 124-5). Had we created a good environment to take risks?

Dani: An International Student from Switzerland and Taking Risks

The most extreme example of Cate's opposite at the beginning of the year was Dani, an exchange student from Switzerland, who struggled with the English language and the course throughout the year. He had expected a traditional history course filled with information, note taking and objective tests. Although the students did gain a great deal of information, we also had asked them to reflect on their learning and to make personal connections to their learning. Dani would pass in assignments, all carefully done, and ask: "Is this what you wanted?" He was often confused, and sometimes he was angry. Earlier in the year he had passed in a paper on the Renaissance. It was supposed to have a comparison, a reflection, and a connection to personal life. Dani had researched Henry VIII and Martin Luther. His research summary was comprehensive and well constructed, but he had not done a reflection nor

the comparison. When we had a conference I asked him what he thought about these two very different men. He hesitated, then began to talk about how religion had not been a strong part of his life, but when he came to America, his "family" had been extremely religious. I asked him about the relationship between religious people and behavior. Did religion make a person act morally? As soon as I gave him "permission" to say that sometimes religion does not mean a person is good, he wrote a most profound reflection about himself, America, Henry, and Martin Luther. Perhaps he had crossed a boundary from Received to Subjective knowing during that conversation.

After this success at about the midpoint of the year, he continued to struggle with expectations and his own voice, but began to enjoy describing his reflections on music and paintings, often the dark and mysterious ones. In his final paper, he said that he had "broken all the rules." In his final assignment Dani had found his own voice and had taken a major risk in writing a poem. Dani had researched, compared, and contrasted the Romantic and Neo-Classical era, ending with a reflection of his own thoughts:

> *I have to say that I really like the music of the Romantic Period. Why? I don't know. Maybe because my characteristics match better with those of the Classical Period and I sometimes wish to be more creative, personal, and free.*

His poem is probably the most profound indication of why he felt he broke the rules in his final project. Dani describes it best:

> *I have to tell you that I don't really know why I chose to write a poem in my final paper. Actually, I've always been kind of afraid of poems, especially of writing poems. I don't know why, probably because I always feel [that I do] not*

fully understand them. Another possible reason is the style most poems are written in. I think if you have to say something, it is much easier to write it in a formal way. My poem is my first one ever! As you can see my poem doesn't have any kind of "double meaning" whatsoever.

If I don't know what you're talking about
What do you know?
I'm sick of you.
Have you ever asked yourself what the truth of life would be?
Have you ever tried to touch a star?
Have you ever looked at the blue of the sea?
Have you ever listened to the wind?
Have you ever felt the warmth of the sun?
I don't know…
Go, open your eyes and look for the real truth
And tell me what you've found.

Dani had begun the class with the expectation of our telling him what he needed to know, perhaps the "truth"? He had changed his idea of truth. When he had written about Martin Luther and Henry VIII, the truth had been the information. In this poem the truth was in trying to touch a star, or really looking at the blue of the sea. He sees himself as being more of a Neo-Classicist, yet he ended the year appreciating the Romantics "ways of knowing the world" and writing a poem that tells someone to find the truth in Romantic places, in the stars, the blue of the sea, the sound of the wind, the warmth of the sun. In his final evaluation he pointed out the irony of his complaining

about school and tests and homework, but enjoying it so much.

Dani had come from another culture and had not wanted independence, but had expected information. Dani had struggled with our expectations for reflection and voice. Although English was not his native language, he had been able to read and write more than adequately in English. We had modified two of our assignments for him because of his language only when ideas and language had been too complex for him to completely understand easily. This had happened twice when the class had studied Shakespearean plays and Arcadia by Tom Stoppard. Dani worked on specific passages and incidents that he selected to discuss and analyze instead of having entire plays to deal with.

Sally: A Student with a Language Disability and Gaining a Voice

Like Dani, Sally had some difficulty developing her own voice. Sally was a Special Education student who received assistance in reading and in writing for an hour a day. She was organized and conscientious, but often depended on our information to put her projects together. Her ideas were clearly stated and often close restatements of what she had read. She enjoyed working in groups and thought the steady rhythm of Baroque music was really "cool." She danced in the back row of the auditorium while our class watched a few students from our class, Mr. Parsons at piano, Mr. Palmetto, and other members of Chorus, sing an historically accurate Baroque song. In the third quarter final Sally had done a good job of summarizing information, but had difficulty making connections between what she was learning and her life. Though she was always busily involved in her work, she still had not yet developed a voice or made connections to her learning. However, in the far more demanding final project, she

showed great growth. She had chosen Picasso for her research because Guernica had fascinated her when we had studied the modern era. As she researched, she was shocked that this great artist had not been "nice." She developed confidence in her own eyes. This growth can be seen in her description of "Girl Before a Mirror:"

> *When I look at this picture it kind of makes my eyes go weird because of all the great color and shapes he used in the picture. The way he has painted this one is awesome. When you first look at it [the picture] doesn't look like a girl before a mirror but a girl backwards looking in the mirror wandering [wondering] what she looks like to the outside people. Also when you look at it kind of looks like she is reaching out to hug herself, but she is just out of reach.*

She said that she deserved a B because she had worked really hard. *I think I worked to my fullest ability.* But what she said during the final conference was an indication of the kind of experience she had had during the course. When asked what she would remember about the class, she said her blonde pony tail bouncing, a reflection of her positive attitude: "EVERYTHING! I remember everything. I liked everything. It was wonderful. I'll never forget this class. It was cool."

Ryan: Cutting Class and the Beat Generation

In contrast, Ryan was quiet and often said that he did not like school. According to the nurse, he skipped many classes. Yet, according to our records, Ryan missed only one class during the entire year, and he had apologized profusely for his absence. Ryan did not see himself as intelligent, although his contemporaries did. He did not see himself as a model for anything outstanding, though the Special Education teacher with whom he worked patiently each day in the preschool did, as did Mr. Parsons and I.

Ryan played the guitar, composed songs, and was fascinated by the Beat Generation

> *Because I enjoy writing and do feel that it can change the way people think. This [the Beat Generation era] was a time when I feel I could have fit in. The ideas of freedom and creativity, self expression and passion, that's what life's about. I wander through today and try to find my place, but it seems that nobody cares. How can someone with so much emotion and passion find a place amongst today's emptiness and lack of thought? I only wish that maybe my own ideas could have some sort of an impact upon society and everything else.*

His final project included research on these rebellious and creative men. He wrote the lyrics, music, and performed his own song on video as Bob Dylan had performed "Look out Kid" in an alley. His poem and performance, videotaped by his mother, was a eulogy to these men and a brief history of the twentieth century as Ryan sees it.

Beat Down Pretend English Blues

Beat up Tied down Joined the Army Pushed Around

Jack walks 'cross Allen comes out

Nobody speaks until he shouts

"What exactly is it that you know?"

It's not what you know it's what you hide that shows

Lost Thoughts Found Dreams Someone screams it's not what it seems

Tim frees minds bob sings folk

Haven't had a president since james k. polk

But what does he do any way

Nobody listens so he doesn't bother to say

Flat broke all alone Lost in a world of 'nonimous clones

Woody rides trains freedom wakes up

They'll share their soul for money in a cup

Society's proven no more than a joke

Free your mind for ten cents and an empty toke

Torments long lines ecstatic spirituality of urban life

Howl is read in '56

Elevated spirituality as away life ticks

Now everybody has discovered walt

Society's crumblin' but it ain't nobody's fault

Drop out forsake maybe the moonlight really is fake

Buddha rules jazz is king

Everyone together they start to sing

Bill speaks only for himself

But everyone's disgusted by so called western wealth

First thought best thought always be friendly towards your thoughts

Order leaves Holmes says go

Everybody's wonderin' what it is they know

But the end it must be coming soon

Or maybe it all begins in the afternoon

Ginsberg goodbye thank you for all your easy lies

Paulson's gone woody went too

What exactly is it that we should do

If we can't decide

I guess we could say that all they said were lies

Ryan ends his paper

> *This was not an easy paper.... When I listen and read them [the Beats], even though it's all over, you know that they did something right. To have a voice that is heard may seem very easy, but to have a voice that is understood is more worthwhile.*

In his self evaluation he says that he gave himself the grades (mainly As) because

> *This grade was a pain to earn and finish. It took me an awful long time to fit the facts in a song that was creative. The video just kind of came to me, so that was fairly easy, but the work took a while. I actually enjoyed this project. I like to do whatever I want.*

Although students say that they want to be free from the structure of texts, tests, and lectures, the alternative of setting their own course is challenging even for those who have their own voices. Yet at the end of the semester, most students felt satisfied

with their progress.

The seniors left after this project, but the juniors remained for a final two weeks. During that time we wanted the juniors to do a complete review of their notes and do a final reflective paper. Instead of an open book, notes, and timeline test, we asked the students to create a game for humanities modeled after Trivial Pursuit, which our class and the other humanities class eventually named Consequential Pursuit. The students were to create six questions for each era based on six of the areas we had studied: art, architecture, literature, music, history and philosophy. (See Appendix K.)
In addition they were to select an era which most reflected them and explain why the era appealed to them. We thought, Mr. Parsons and I had spent a few days trying to decide how to give them a final (which he really wanted to do) and have some fun (which, I am surprised to admit, I wanted them to do). Mr. Parsons suggested that the two assignments would balance information and facts (the game) with analysis and reflection (the favorite era essay). This smaller group of nine students worked as a single group. They shared resources, individual timelines that they had saved from earlier eras, and worked independently in an informal setting. At the same time, Mr. Parsons and I discussed the students' final projects and self-evaluations with them individually. With two exceptions, the students wrote effective, accurate, and often witty or creative questions and answers and worked independently for these weeks.

Amie: A Difficult Year

Amie had difficulty in all of her subjects that year for many reasons that she describes best in her description of her favorite era.

The era that I connect best with would have to be modern, not because I

was born modern, but because it is so "unorganized" compared to all the others. It is the one that I think has no boundaries and no limit and everything falls apart. Although I have many boundaries and limits, I am very unorganized as you may have been able to tell through having me this past year. I like the past because it was not so fast paced. Everybody now is in a rush. Back then they had time to spend with their families, but now I'm lucky if I ever get to see my father. I'm scared to get older because nothing will ever be slow...

Amie's comparison between the modern era and things falling apart was based on a discussion about Yeats' poem "The Second Coming."

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold.
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.

(1921)

The image of the falconer losing control of the falcon and the center that would not hold was reflected in her sense that she had lost her direction and that that she and her life were falling apart. Yet, Amie had pulled herself together, but she had struggled.

Mark: At the Fringes

The final grades for both seniors and juniors consisted of 15 As, 5 B's, 2 Cs (Jake and Carrie), and 3 Ds. Mark, Scot, and Jim received Ds for the semester. Jim was the only junior with a D. He did pass in some questions, but they were a random selection and indicated no sense of era or category. His final project on the Ku Klux Klan was an historical summary of the movement without reflection or connection.

Scot's lack of participation was discussed in the Chapter III. Finally there is Mark a very capable student who was frequently absent and who frequently forgot about or lost assignments. At the end of third semester we thought that he was going to succeed, for he received a B for the quarter. With prodding he had done some remarkably insightful work. One day when I asked him about his work, he said: "I'm just lazy." After that conversation, however, he began to work harder. His composition about a musical composition is the product of a student with insight, sensitivity, and intelligence.

> *I find this piece to be extremely tranquil and soothing, the melody relaxes you and almost puts one to sleep. This piece has its fair share of emotion and passion as well, which was common of the era. The music itself sounds sort of middeval and the voices reminded me of music which could be heard in ancient churches. It incorporates a wide variety of dynamics which are put together in a hypnotic way. This piece reminds me of clouds, moving slow and tranquile at times but almost without warning gets faster and almost violent like a cloud during a storm. The ending is very subtle, it does not end in a dramatic fashion but in a rather gradual way.*

At the end of the year, he almost failed since he did not pass in his project until after grades had closed. He was at the fringes of our class. He sometimes tried to stay connected and was capable of doing all of the work well. Had he been an underchallenged and therefore disengaged student from Auburn?

Carrie and Jake received Cs for their final grades. The remainder of the students had done good or excellent work. Amie received a B, her highest grade all year. Cate, Sally, and Ryan had received As. This had been Sally's first A. The student with the

highest average for the year was Spencer. His final paper reflects the standards that we had discussed and reinforced all year. He, a junior, responded to the question, which era reflects you most clearly going beyond the requirements in many ways. I have included all of it because of his deep understanding of learning and himself.

Spencer: An Exemplar

Spencer has written a very good reflection. I have annotated it, and made similar comments on papers.

Clearly focused idea	*When you think of Leonardo DaVinci, the Sistine Chapel, Claudio Monteverdi, and Christopher Columbus, who comes to your mind? From my perspective, I, myself come to mind. This period labeled Renaissance reflects me most through its art and philosopher/explorers who thought they knew everything, but were in for a great surprise.*
Ironic	
Ironic	*The Late Renaissance period was a period of perfection, sweet harmony, wisdom, and new discoveries. In this, I see myself....*
knowledge of era	*Leonardo DaVinci was a famous artist who is known for his painting of the Mona Lisa. His other paintings include Madonna and Child and the Virtuuian Man. He was a perfectionist who very rarely strayed from the rules and was very smart. He had so many ideas from his huge imagination and so little time to do them out.*
comparison, self-	

awareness	*I am similar to him because I am very smart in school. Which also makes me a perfectionist at everything I do. If something seems or looks wrong to me, then I have to fix it!! In work and at school, I usually don't stray too much from the original directions that were given to me, but I am starting to as I get older. I guess my mom would describe my one way of straying from the rules best...My dress code. And since I am a theater person, I let my imagination run wild. I always have new ideas about my room, my car (YEAH), MY LIFE!! But I never seem to act upon them because I'm too busy perfecting my schoolwork....*
comparison	*Another way that I relate to the Late Renaissance period is by their explorers and philosophers. Everyone was looking for new discoveries back then...scientific, technological, and geographic, basically anything that would stir up conversation among the people. The famous explorer Christopher Columbus sailed the ocean blue to the West Indies, which he thought, was America. Martin Luther was a strong person who stood up for what he believed. Magellan completed his 3-year voyage around the world that proved the Earth wasn't flat. Balboa discovered the Pacific Ocean while Diaz sailed down the coast of Africa to show that the people who lived in the Mediterranean Sea area weren't*

originality	*isolated from the rest of the world.*
	Notice how all these explorers were just beginning to get the ball rolling for the next group of explorers would
irony	*soon figure out that there may be life on Mars or that there is a way to cure the AIDS virus. But all of them thought that they knew everything and that there was really nothing else to discover at the time. This all relates to me because I'm growing up. Soon I'll be graduating and going on to college.*
self-knowledge	*I've been through High School and learned a lot of stuff. Everyone knows that saying... "Ask a teenager now while they still know everything" well, maybe I don't know everything, but at least I think I know ALMOST everything!*
imagination comparison	*What else is there for me to learn...then college will hit me. And I'll move out and start straying from the rules and becoming a little more independent. And then I can act upon my ideas because I'll know more about life to help me set them up.*
knowledge	*For example, Christopher Columbus thought it was America he discovered, but it wasn't. I think that there is life*
connection	*beyond Earth. And as Christopher declared that the West Indies was America based on his beliefs, I declare that there has to be life out there in this huge, vast solar system. We can not be the only breathing beings here. And like Chris, I*

	could be wrong too. *That is why I've been calling it Late Renaissance period. Because soon, in a few centuries, the Romantic/Impressionist period came and everything became more complex and more independent. Just like me, my ways and points of view will become stronger and more complex with more knowledge.*

Spencer accomplished the requirements of the assignment and created and ironic comparison. For Spencer, something had happened that year in class. He had been engaged and had gained meaning from the course.

The Students and Reflection

All students had said that they gained something from the course, at least knowledge, and most had gained an appreciation for the arts. We felt that reflections and asking students to make connections to their learning had helped student become engaged in their learning.

The art of teaching for meaning is to activate and facilitate the self-directed, pattern finding nature of the brain. And that goal can be accomplished effectively only when the whole body/mind/brain is engaged (Caine al., p. 118).

Recent studies suggest that student achievement is not a singular achievement, but that the school environment and a shared belief that all students can learn can improve student achievement. "An enriched and more demanding curriculum, respect for students' languages and cultures, high expectations for all students, and

encouragement for parental involvement make a positive difference" (Nieto, 1996, p. 79). Had we or perhaps the high school or perhaps the larger society not demanded enough, encouraged enough, or been involved enough so that all were not engaged?

As the juniors left the class in June, all making sure they had their portfolios and timelines to show their parents, Mr. Parsons and I wondered with Spencer what else we needed to learn in this complex world.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter is a summary of the results of the study and its implications for future practice and research. In it, the answers to the five Guiding Questions are summarized. In the matrix in Appendix N, I synthesize the findings of the study and describe the evolution of my understanding, the changes in assessments, and the changes in students as they relate to the levels of cognition. I recommend further studies about the effectiveness of collaborative assessment both within classrooms and among teachers. Also, I recommend studies of the developmental process of teachers as they try to implement change and its implications for faculty development. I also recommend further studies that assess the effectiveness and impact of alternative methods of assessment on curriculum, teachers, students, and classroom dynamics.

A Matrix of the Evolution of the Assessments, Teachers' Epistemology, Assignments, and Levels of Complexity in the Humanities Class

During the study, I began to see the complexity of the changes taking place in the Humanities classroom. The matrix in Appendix N summarizes changes in my understanding. Initially, I thought of traditional and learning-centered classes as mutually exclusive, and believed that learning-centered classes were the better choice. Then, I started to see the changes that we were making along a gradual continuum, instead of polar opposites. Grades of A, B, Not Yet describes our initial compromise because students did not accept the change. However, I continued to see each step in the learning-centered direction as an improvement.

Through readings about cognitive complexity, for example in Caine et al. (1997) or Women's Ways of Knowing (Belenky et al. 1986), I began to see that our assignments were "moving up" a developmental scale. In Caine et al. I also began to see that teacher epistemologies and their methodologies might be looked at developmentally. To move my co-teacher "up" developmentally, I exposed him to other ways of looking at a classroom. As we developed more learning-centered assignments with multiple and constructed answers like the quarter exam or the self-designed project. Mr. Parsons expressed his concern for each of these assessments, which I saw as resistance and his need to move "up" developmentally. I saw our assignments as experiences that could move students along a developmental continuum as well. For example, when a Received Knower was asked to write a reflection, that person might begin to trust in his or her own understanding of the world and become a Subjective Knower, (see Chapter I). Cara's reflection on Picasso in Chapter V showed this change from Received to Subjective; she was able to discuss Picasso's work in her own words and was not restricted to the ideas of the experts. These differences helped me to understand that some assignments did not work because specific students or the entire class may not have been developmentally ready for the particular cognitive complexity of the assignment.

However, in my final model, I have a more complex picture; it is an interactive model. I realized that each of these levels of knowledge acquisition, perceptual orientation, ways of knowing, kinds of knowledge, teaching strategies, and assessments needed to play a role in the classroom, often *at the same time*. They are not mutually exclusive; the "highest" developmental level of thinking might not be appropriate all

the time. The acquisition of knowledge is an appropriate activity, not a lower level of activity. I had privileged one level or stage over another. I realized that students could be acquiring knowledge at the beginning of class and constructing their own reflections later. The problems with the Arcadia essay (Appendix D) and the number of "Not Yets" indicated that students were not ready for such a complex assignment. Instead, I began to realize that my co-teacher, though I had felt he needed to move up, actually had created a secure atmosphere for the students. In his music unit, students had taken notes, taken a traditional test, and had written a brief research paper on a composer. They had comfortably completed these assignments. I had created discomfort with some assignments, yet when the students took risks, their papers and projects resulted in more complex thinking. Students had to analyze, compare and contrast, connect to their own lives, and synthesize their ideas instead of summarizing the ideas of others. Mr. Parsons' concerns were warranted, but we supported students as they assembled their answers. In our challenging assessments, the quarter final and the self-designed project, we gave students time to get feedback: in the former two days, in the latter a few weeks.

By the end of the year we allowed times both for taking risks and stretching boundaries and times for learning new information. Instead of mutually exclusive types of classrooms, knowledge, teachers, or assessments, each had its appropriate place in learning.

In the Humanities classroom, assessment became an integral part of the learning and teaching cycle. Teachers and students spent an entire year defining, and refining our goals and standards, reflecting on our progress, and determining our next steps.

> Assessment is, by definition, judgmental. It is a deeply personal and emotional experience for the student being assessed; and it can have a far-reaching impact on individual students, on educators, and on the nature of the society in which they live (Earl, 1997, p. 158).

Mr. Parsons said that he had never thought or talked so much about a class before. Until the last day of class, my co-teacher and I were extremely concerned about whether or not the course was beneficial. In addition, the ethical burden of determining grades and making choices about a classroom, weighed heavily on both of us. The evaluation of Carrie and Scott clearly shows our concern and care.

The seriousness of our professional responsibilities did not come primarily from the threat of high stakes tests or any authority outside of the classroom; it came from our personal sense of responsibility to Amy, to Sean, to Caitlin and our professional concern for our disciplines. Mr. Parsons and I assessed our alignment with the Massachusetts Frameworks and determined that we were at least proficient in almost everything in terms of curriculum. Were all of our students proficient? We did not think so. Yet, we did everything we could to motivate, engage, and move all of them, particularly the more resistant or indifferent ones. Mr. Parsons and I maintained the highest standards that *we (as teachers)* could in *that (specific)* class.

The nation, state, district, parents, teachers, and students could state goals or needs. The nation wanted competitive workers and active citizens; the state wanted a better life for its citizens; the district saw the need to move its students out into the larger world; parents wanted respect, and students wanted more than traditional lecture classes.

The Five Guiding Questions

1. What kinds of assessments take place in this course?

I found that our assessments shifted in emphasis in a gradual process throughout the year. From a fairly typical traditional class it shifted toward a more learning-centered environment. (See Appendix N). By the end of the year, I found that our assessments encompassed the full range of tests, performance assessments, and authentic assessments. Initially tests had been fairly typical unit tests, separate and given after teaching. However, as the year went on, more often these assessments extended over time and were thus imbedded in the classroom activities. At the end of the year, the game Consequential Pursuit tested knowledge and facts. Instead an objective test, it was a group effort. The students worked together for a week, sharing resources and quizzing one another as they generated questions. As the year progressed, our assessments required more complex thinking. Early in the year, the Arcadia assignment, in which students needed to construct an answer, had been somewhat beyond most of our students indicated by the number of "Not Yets" that we gave. By the end of the year the complex thinking of third quarter exam and the self-directed assignments had been successful based on self evaluations and teacher evaluations of students' work.

The implications for other classes is that changing testing formats requires a deeper understanding, and that changing assessment methods requires more than developing an assignment. In order to be successful, these assignments need to look at what is being tested as well as the best way to have students demonstrate that knowledge at that time. Students can be resistant to change or not ready for change (see Chapter III for a fuller discussion). (See Appendix N). Traditional methodology

teaches students to sit passively, to ask few questions, and to behave acceptably. When learning-centered methods are used, these methods require a great deal of planning for teachers and more awareness of what testing means. Both need to be part of a teacher's repertoire.

I used the following ideas as a stepping-off point for developing my theory about what happened in my class. Initially I had seen traditional and learning-centered methodologies as mutually exclusive, and the latter as more desirable and more highly developed than the other. In a discussion of what he terms positivism and constructivism, David Jonassen, developed a continuum, a dialectic, between the poles of the educational objectivism and constructivism which I saw useful for my understanding of the changes in my class. He says:

> On one pole, the positivists or objectivists believe that there is reliable knowledge about the world. As learners, our goal is to gain this knowledge; as educators to transmit it (1992, p. 137).

The world is real; it has structure; it can be structured for the learner. Although this is an extreme, these assumptions are reflected in what some term the traditional, banking, or factory model of education in which teachers (and textbooks) present and interpret for the learners the true information about the world. The information is presented in an orderly fashion, in a linear structure from the least to the most complex. A learner's mind mirrors reality.

At the other extreme are the constructivists who believe that

reality is in the mind of the learner who must put together, actively construct or interpret, meaning. Knowledge is individualistic and each of us has a somewhat different understanding about the world because we interpret it in the context of our own experience (Jonassen, 1992, pp. 138-9).

Assessment in the former extreme then checks if the learner has gained the true information given to him or her by the teacher and text. Assessment in the latter extreme asks the learner what he or she understands.

Jonassen describes knowledge acquisition as a progression from the former to the latter, from novice to expert. I adapted his stages into a three-stage, rather than just a two-pole model.

Kinds of Knowledge (adapted from Jonassen, 1992)	**Well-structured knowledge** (skills, coding) A, B, Cs	**Ill-structured knowledge** Reading literature	**Elaborate Structures** Interpretation
Stages (Jonassen, 1992)	**Initial Knowledge Acquisition**	**Advanced Knowledge Acquisition**	**Expertise**
Teaching Strategies (my adaptation)	practice feedback	coaching mentoring	structuring learning by learner
Assessment (my adaptation)	reinforcement testing	collaboration conferences	self-evaluation reflection

Fig. 1 Adaptation of Jonassen's Three Stages of Knowledge Acquisition

(1992, 142).

In addition, I added teaching strategies and assessment to show the ranges of assessment that coexisted in the Humanities class and to show the change in the balance of assessment over time. In the initial phases of teaching when the learner is a novice, for example, a child learning the alphabet or one of our students learning about music, much of the teaching is skill-based. Students practice and receive feedback on their alphabet or musical notation. As the knowledge becomes less well structured, for example, when reading a story or when listening for the themes in a symphony, students need feedback and coaching. When knowledge becomes more elaborate and the learner can see some interconnections with other domains, as when students read about living things and care for the class gerbil, or as they study the Classical Era or begin to compose their own music using the instruments available in the 19th century, they need less direct teaching, but need environments rich with resources, experts, teachers, and research materials (1992, p. 142). Despite the term Expertise, Jonassen notes citing Vygotsky and Piaget, that novice learners are probably the "most constructivistic learners" (1992, p. 146) since they are making meaning of their worlds.

Our Humanities classroom moved along this scale from left toward the right becoming more constructivist than positivist by the end of the year, though all levels remained throughout the year. We had tests (open book) at the beginning of the year, but at the end of the year the alternative to a test of information was more constructivist; in Consequential Pursuit students found facts and created a question and answer game (Appendix J). They reviewed the year's information, but were not tested in a formal

way. We gave positivist feedback about the accuracy of their information at the end of the year, the kind of feedback for Novices.

At the beginning of the year the students were asked to construct their own meaning about a very complex play, Arcadia, in a writing assignment which resulted in very few students performing above our "Not Yet" level. By the end of the year, all students constructed their own self-designed project, and most students counted their projects as successful. The students had developed and their ability to construct meaning. In addition our methods had evolved and we had learned how to support this kind of learning with coaching.

Perhaps the some of the differences between my co-teacher and me can be clarified with Figure 1. My college classes had been assessed through their writing, presentations, and conferences. I began the year with constructivist expectations for classrooms. Mr. Parsons had expected a more positivistic balance and wanted final exams. Yet, when he had taught on his own, he had given students alternative ways of constructing meaning through illustrating concepts in the pictures in the gardens assignment. He was most amenable to giving open book tests at the beginning of the year when I suggested it. By the end of the third quarter, our exam included constructing meaning and two days of coaching prior to the exam. However, until it was successful, my co-teacher felt that this exam had too many pieces. The final exam for juniors, which my co-teacher had wanted to be a formal final, was ultimately a reflection and a

game. My co-teacher may not have initiated these changes, but once we began to develop assignments, he contributed ideas and structure. (See Chapters III and IV.)

At the beginning of the year, I had to modify my expectations for a constructivist environment. I had to move toward the more positivistic pole when I expected the students to be able to construct meaning from Arcadia (Chapter III) and most were unable to do it. I realized, in retrospect, that we needed to provide more time for the students to practice and receive feedback before they constructed their own interpretation of the main idea of the play.

Thus, our assessments evolved in a collaborative environment and in a developmental way toward more alternative methods of assessment. This process took into account two teachers' often differing interpretations of the needs of the students, the success and failure of previous assessments, and the curriculum and instruction needs as assessed by the teachers.

2. What relationships does this course have to the needs, goals, and standards of students, parents, teachers, and administrators in the Auburn system?

The course accommodated most closely to the needs and goals of the students and teachers within the course because they made up the social context of the class. However, we all brought ideas and expectations from our own contexts. As teachers, Mr. Parsons and I brought professional expectations. In experience and philosophy I used more constructivist methods; Mr. Parsons was more traditional or positivistic. As

the year went on, we moved away from a typical lecture, textbook class structure, toward group work and conferences. When we looked at our class against the external professional standards of the Arts and the English and Language Arts Frameworks, we decided we were adequate, ranking ourselves mainly with threes out of a possible four. Mr. Parsons had no familiarity with the standards, yet he agreed with their goals and in those areas where he saw that we were not as strong, he wanted to work toward their standards. I had been aware of the external standards set by the Frameworks, but the English courses I had previously taught before I had ever seen the Frameworks would have accommodated to those standards more closely than the Humanities course did. Of course, the Frameworks are based on recent educational research with which I had been familiar both as a teacher and as a doctoral student such as Rosenblatt's Literature as Exploration (1996), Heath's Ways with Words (1983), Moffet's Active Voices (1981), Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences (1993), Vygotsky's Thought and Language (1991), and Sapier's The Skillful Teacher (1997).

I was disappointed not to be able to articulate more than the general goals from any source. Although tests like the MEAPs and trials of the MCAS have been given, and rubrics for evaluation are being generated by the state, to date there are no exemplars or benchmarks. However, it is clear from The Common Chapters that a goal of Education Reform is the learning-centered or constructivist classroom, or a shift in that direction as described in Chapter IV. However, I wonder how much impact those benchmarks and standards might have had if they were simply given by the state to teachers. In order to comprehend the full meaning of an exemplar, teachers need hands on practice with them. In order to truly understand what standards are, students need to

get feedback on their own work. I feel that although goals may be set externally, for them to become the goals of a teacher, a student, or a class, they must be discussed, tried, that is, their meaning must be constructed by each individual teacher, student, and class.

The other teaching team, the English Department, the former teachers' ideas, and students' anticipation discussed in Chapter V had an impact on the design of the class. We felt free to create new units. Mrs. Johnson had said that the first year they had just finished the Medieval Era by the end of the year; the next year they had changed the course again and had finished the Modern Era. The other teaching team was often in parallel eras, but they handled their projects differently because their students really liked to perform for the whole class and because they had different goals and standards. The students' needs, specifically the antipathy for performance, as described in Chapter V had an impact on the way we restructured the class toward more small-group and individual conferences. We had modified assignments to meet the needs of students and to challenge them to grow.

Parents had little direct influence on the course. We never heard from a concerned parent through the entire year. However, based on parent questions in Auburn, they are often skeptical of "having fun" and doing "projects" instead of really learning in class. In order for a shift toward a less traditional lecture/test class, parents would have to understand that students can learn and be engaged.

3. How does this course align with the assessment standards and curriculum standards of the Massachusetts Frameworks and national standards?

Mr. Parsons and I evaluated our alignment with the Massachusetts Frameworks and the

Common Chapters in Chapter IV. The course had aligned with those standards, which essentially advocate a learning-centered or constructivist classroom. Certainly I was trying to move the class in that direction which from my experience in my college classes, had been a good teaching environment (Chapter I). However, in this class, we brought in more of the arts and performances. My college classes had been primarily classes of talk, reading, and writing. If I were to teach the course again, I would bring more visualization, presentations, and transformations of one mode of expression to another into my classes.

We aligned adequately with the Arts Frameworks, as discussed in Chapter IV, probably because of the expectations from the other teachers, the English Department, the students, and, of course, Mr. Parsons's professional expectations.

From the way that change took place in this classroom, the implication is that change is gradual and takes place within the context of the classroom, as described in Chapter III. Change from a more positivistic to a more constructivistic environment is far more than a change in textbook or methodology. It is, for me, a change in epistemology, which is discussed more fully later in this chapter. For Mr. Parsons, constructivist assignments were confusing and might not be successful. He was surprised that the students "knew what to do" and "got down to work" (Chapter III). For changes in practice to take place, teachers need specific guidelines, standards, time, and support. Traditionally, teachers have worked alone and have not collaborated about assessment or methodology in any formalized way. As Mr. Parsons's said in Chapter III: "I think if I had worked alone the class would have been better for me, and if you had worked alone the class would have seemed better to you. But this way I think the class is better for

the students."

Students also resisted the idea of constructing meaning for themselves in our class. In some cases, students are the real conservators of the status quo, perhaps not consciously (Chapter III). Gwen describes the ironic experience most clearly in Chapter V when she gets the freedom that she always wished for, but does not recognize it as such. Also, Dani's resistance was evident. His surprise at writing a poem is further evidence that these changes can be rewarding for students as well.

As far as my co-teacher and I could understand the standards, we decided that we aligned fairly well with most of the standards set out by the state. There are no specific curriculum standards distributed to teachers by the national government. When we used the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks to assess our course (Chapter IV), we found weaknesses in revising writing, our use of the media and technology and in the lack of a multicultural emphasis. However, we could not determine whether or not our students were reading, writing, speaking, or performing at an acceptable level because there are no definitive standards, only examples of assignments. By using the Frameworks, we were able to plan improvements for our course for the next year. We maintained the highest standards that we could as two teachers in a specific class.

4. How can the methods of assessment be improved within this course?

In Chapters III and IV I looked at our evolving standards, which became more complex as the year progressed. From multiple choice tests with a single essay question, we evolved to the culminating assessment of the year, the Self-Designed Project. The students designed their own question and answered it in many forms: oral, written, visual. They were expected to find their own answers, reflect on their learning, and

connect these ideas to their own view of reality. From an individual answering objective questions on a traditional test, we evolved to a group game in which the students constructed questions and answers. Spencer's essay in Chapter V is an exemplar which Humanities teachers can use to show students the structure, creativity, connection, reflection, knowledge of information, etc., of an essay.

We lacked agreed-upon, clear standards and goals as we began teaching together. We would have been able to develop more specific goals if the town or the state had a curriculum and specific standards for reading, writing, etc. We developed standards and goals that evolved in complexity throughout the year. This collaborative process required a continual assessment of the needs of the students in curriculum, instruction, and learning environment.

The implications are that teachers need support in developing adequate assessments and need to understand what makes assessments good. Many teachers in Auburn High School use only traditional methods and traditional tests and do not realize that changing assessments can improve motivation and engagement of students in the activities of the class. Teachers also need to recognize that students need support as assessments are changed. They do not necessarily welcome changes, even those which ultimately are positive. See Gwen and Dani's stories (Chapter V).

5. What are the implications for courses in related disciplines?

I found that the constructivist ideas that we evolved toward brought positive results to students who become agents of their own learning. In Chapter V students found the learning experience different and positive. In addition I found that collaboration between teachers could bring change into classrooms. Both Mr. Parsons

and I evolved throughout the year (Chapter III and IV). Also, the students had an opportunity to see two adults working together in a classroom, a rare occurrence in public education. I found that redefining assessment and embedding it in the learning environment could bring positive change to classrooms in student growth and motivation, as shown in Chapter V. Ongoing assessment, that is discussion, reflection, goal setting, peer review, was critical to learning in this dynamic environment.

We also found by our frequent meetings that this shift toward constructivism or the learning-centered classroom requires more work. As evidenced by the number of hours that we spent on this class described in Chapters III and IV, we had to plan more carefully, evaluate work on a more individual level, and assess students daily.

I discovered that we had no clear direction from any source, text, local curriculum, or the state. As we developed a course for the first time, we would have benefited from having a clearer sense of goals and standards which articulate what an advanced, proficient, acceptable, or novice level of writing, presentation, group participation, etc. Those standards needed to be developed in Auburn, as stated by the NEASC report. Knowing where a course is going has always been important, but now that the year 2001 will bring high stakes test for tenth graders, it is essential that teachers know what the standards are and that the students understand them as well. The development of clearer standards would only be the first step. Understanding and implementing them would require time and conversation. Perhaps testing companies, state reformers, and teachers will find that goal of arriving at clearly articulated performance standards has serious limitations because each evaluation is ultimately dependent on human judgment. Models, rubrics, and task analyses must be interpreted

by people. I do think that it is worth the effort.

My study shows that changes have implications beyond a simple change in methodology or materials. Our change in assessments touched on the core values of the teacher, the student, and the classroom. Changing assessments or changing to a more learning-centered classroom require more than a change in report cards or a few professional development courses for teachers. The change encompasses more than methods and materials, more than curriculum; it requires profound behavioral, cognitive, emotional, epistemological, and interpersonal changes; it is a change in culture. I had worked with a young man, fairly recently out of college. He was untenured and concerned about doing a good job. Students, too, did not immediately see thinking on higher levels and making their own meaning as liberating or improving their lot. The impact of changes in education on parents, students, teachers, and communities must be addressed. For these changes to take place, and I think they are improvements, teachers must have time to work together.

Even those who are in favor of education reform may not understand what they are asking teachers to do. In the name of expediency, states have created tests too soon and have not supported teachers and the movements have collapsed, as described in Chapter II in Arizona. In the name of expediency, Boards of Education set out to name call, to call Massachusetts schools failures and to call fifty per cent of our students either Deficient (now unofficially changed to Needs Improvement) or Failures. Compliance is the result of forceful punitive methods. But if learning is truly what the educational reformers say it is, that is, socially constructed, then we need to talk. And further, if the best environment for learning is one in which one can take risks and fail,

one in which challenge is balanced with safety, then a negative, critical, threatening environment of "high stakes" tests will not bring about the desired change in the educational community.

The Need for Standards

I often use an experiential exercise called "Clapping Hands" developed by Kathy Busick (1995) to show teachers the need for clearly articulated and communally shared standards. Five people are asked to do a simple performance task and four to evaluate the performance. The judges are given cards five cards each with a number one through five. The first person is asked to clap and is given only a thank you and a smile. The second person is asked to clap, leaves the room, the raters are asked to score the person, the scores are averaged and the average score is given to the second person. The third person claps and leaves the room. The assessors are given criteria from the National Clapping Institute based on volume, appropriateness, and creativity. The raters rate the performance and give the third person their average score. The fourth person who has watched the rest of the performances is asked about his or her experiences with clapping, his or her strengths or weaknesses, whether he or she is in need support or guidance from the panel and tell him or her that this clap can be practiced first and that he or she can try as often as she wishes and perform with others or alone. The panel discusses clapping and, along with the assessee, set a context for the clap. The person claps and can receive feedback if he or she wants and can try again.

As the group de-briefs it becomes clear that teachers often ask students to work without making standards explicit and using letters or numbers for feedback. The addition of explicit standards, feedback, and coaching make the performance less of an

isolated moment and more of a part of the learning curve. This critique of assessment was clearly appropriate for our classroom. However, I would like to apply it to districts and to statewide testing as well. The term "high standards" is used in all of the education reform literature. Yet, those standards have not been made specific with examples or rubrics of performance. We have only words, but we have no feedback.

Mr. Parsons and I, through many hours of discussion, understood the other's assessment of the students and the progress of the class. An A or a 4 or a 95 are de-contexturalized without that discussion. As we worked with students and returned grades, but more importantly, as we coached them, we were giving them support so that they could learn. Embedding assessment, collaborating on assessment, communally sharing assessment among teachers and students provided our students and the two teachers with opportunities for risk taking and growth.

And just as the most desirable method for assessment in terms of learning in the clapping exercise is through dialogue and creating a communally held understanding of the expectations, I think this is as true for statewide and national assessments.

Assessment as Collaboration

Collaborative dialogue has taken place in some states. Collaborative professional development methods, which extend beyond a classroom and two teachers, or a team of four teachers, or even a department, are being used to support teacher growth. According to Lorna Earl and Paul LeMathieu, the Pittsburg process is a form of teacher collaborative assessment which shows promise for promoting and establishing genuine changes in how teachers regard and assess their students' work and use that assessment for learning. This professional development concept is based on constructivist ideals in which teachers develop criteria and make meaning together,

as Mr. Parsons and I had. This process, according to research, results in a set of criteria that are clearer and better than anyone's initial framework. These expectations made up of high commonly held and applied criteria become commonly understood across professionals and more consistently applied across students (Earl et al., pp. 166-167).

Teachers as Assessors

Teacher training has not traditionally given teachers adequate practice in devising or using assessment. Most teacher's self-generated test assess "mainly recall, recognition, and low-level skills" (Rogers 1991 as cited by Earl et al., p. 160). Traditionally, the teacher's manual with its tests was the "teacher proof" guide for generating tests. Teachers need to understand the principles of good testing because if classes become more learning- and not textbook-centered, assessment becomes a critical component. Working in collaborative groups within a school, district, or state to develop standards and methods can provide teachers with the understanding and support necessary to develop good assessments. This dialogue also results in far more than commonly held standards and grades that are consistent from classroom to classroom. It also creates a dynamic environment for ongoing assessment of courses. It makes teachers and their judgments central to assessment and setting standards. When an assessment is well designed, it is testing what is being taught.

Validity and reliability need to be removed from the hands of distant assessment experts and become de-mystified so that teachers can comfortably recognize that they are teaching to their own tests, essentially what happens when assessment is embedded in the teaching and learning cycle. Teachers should feel confident that their own tests are authentic tests of their teaching and that their standards are shared with other teachers across the hall and across the state, and perhaps across the country.

Teachers need a variety of methods for assessment beyond fill-ins and short essays and need to understand what they are testing with each method. In a sense the medium can be the message. If we test only memorized facts, then we are also teaching that facts are what we value. If we test complex problem-solving activities, again we are teaching with that test that this is what we value. If working with others to learn is part of the test, for example with peer review, then we are teaching that cooperation, critical awareness, and communication are valued. Learning objectives, criteria, active engagement, student self-assessment, multiple means of assessing, and assessing what is being taught need to be considered when students are assessed. Many teachers are not trained to do this and depend upon the experts to tell them what they have taught. This understanding is crucial since students, teachers and districts will be assessed in the MCAS tests. However, assessment change is not sufficient.

> Standards and assessments are the slices of bread holding the sandwich of educational reform together, but the meat of the sandwich is the delivery system—the quality of teaching, the access to technology and laboratories, the depth and challenge of the curriculum (Wolk et. al, 1997, p. 32).

What is the impact of Education Reform on the thinking and behavior of teachers who must translate standards and new curricula into a daily reality: from a curriculum, into a lesson plan, then into a class where 25 students arrive at Room 100 every day. There, in the face of diverse student needs, standards and curricula become less definitive; they become a moving target, a process, and a complex of behaviors, not translatable into a clear and simple step by step process. Some textbooks, teachers' manuals, and curricula were created supposedly as "teacher-proof," meaning learning would take place

whatever the quality of the teacher. With this kind of faith in the textbook, if a district chose its materials carefully and wrote its curriculum clearly, no matter who stood at the front of the class, the curriculum would work.

Fortunately, the Education Reform movement supports professional development and recognizes that teachers cannot be "trained," but in some instances need to be transformed into seeing the world differently (Caine et al., 1997). Mr. Parsons, the September after the course was over, talked about the constructivism of his wife's classes and the Humanities with great appreciation. I had never used the term with him.

This process is limited also by what some educational writers call capacity (Caine et al., 1997). Not all teachers can reach the same level. The capacity of teachers to help students process experience actually depended on the teachers' ability to design experiences in the first place.

> When teachers need to oversee and manage everything that is going on in the classroom, they have neither the time nor the opportunity to walk around and interact in sufficient depth with individuals and small groups (Caine et al., 1997, p. 184).

System and teacher capacity are terms which often have conflicting definitions. For top down reformers capacity means the maximum amount of production, that is, how much can be done by a teacher or system. The usual measurement of this kind of capacity then is testing. For bottom up reformers capacity means the opportunity to develop and share knowledge. The measure of this kind of capacity might be an assessment of the time and importance given to teacher interaction and growth (Smith et al., 1997, p.

101). The former might trust in teacher-proof materials and testing, the latter would invest in professional development.

I sometimes wondered whether I should have invested so much time looking at a single classroom instead of studying larger trends to understand my responsibilities. Jesse Goodman in "Change Without Difference: School Restructuring in Historical Perspective" critiques what he calls the "Third Wave" of school reformers whose mission is preparing the United States of the information and technological age. Even though they are restructuring schools, he says that they have not tried to change what he considers the core of education. He cites Ted Sizer and other movements that are rethinking the "wiring" and inner workings of the schools not just the walls, and says that many grassroots movements have come up with some quick and useful steps including having teachers come together to exchange graded papers and discuss grading standards as methods of getting to the core of values and the possibility of change. He praises those reform efforts that concern themselves not with restructuring, but with educating the children. He says to truly transform schools, educators must work "at the core of school change... to address the value commitments that undergird schools in our society" (1997, p.27).

Caine et al. (1997) studied the complexity of teacher and systemic growth. I incorporated their theory into my table. (See Appendix N.) They determined that there were three levels of teacher growth that they described as a transformational more than simply an informational process. In their study they described the difference among teachers as epistemological, a different way of seeing education. They described each level as a Perceptual Orientation. The first viewed teaching as an accumulation of

knowledge and quantifiable outcomes and on a planned series of steps that lead to a skill or concept. Other researchers call these teachers traditional teachers, their classes teacher-centered classrooms, and their methodology the "banking theory" a hierarchical one in which the teacher is the banker whose currency, deposited in her student's minds, is knowledge. For these teachers assessment is replication of text and teacher information (Caine et al., 1997, p. 217).

Kind of Knowledge	**Well-structured knowledge** A, B, Cs	**Ill-structured knowledge** Reading literature	**Elaborate Structures** Interpretation
Stages (Jonassen, 1992)	**Initial Knowledge Acquisition**	**Advanced Knowledge Acquisition**	**Expertise**
Teacher epistemology (Caine, 1997)	**Perceptual Orientation I** See knowledge as quantifiable, as an accumulation of skills	**Perceptual Orientation II** Hierarchical teaching, but emphasize ideas and concepts and facts and skills	**Perceptual Orientation III** Organization is based on making meaning and connections and focusing on critical ideas

The second level of teachers that the Caines describe are more complex in their use of materials and its approaches, yet their teaching is still hierarchical. These teachers emphasize ideas and concepts along with facts and skills. The third level of teachers use what are often called learning-centered methods which Caine and Caine call "brain-based," aligning their instruction with recent research in cognitive psychology, learning styles, and classroom environment. Their classes are student or learning-centered. Organization is not based on the teacher's plan, but on the student's construction or making their own meaning of knowledge. Caine and Caine describe this third level as having "elements of self organization [students' own organization], as

classrooms gathered individually or as a unit around critical ideas, meaningful questions and purposeful projects" (p. 219). For these teachers, time is flexible and student driven. They use paper and pencil tests and authentic assessment, but focus mainly on two areas: How the student can demonstrate his understanding, and how these understandings can be applied to real world experiences (p. 220).

The differences among these levels is profound. Caine and Cain observe that when the ones and the threes get together, they are speaking a different language. "What is creativity and discovery for Perceptual Orientation 3 thinkers is noise and disorder to Perceptual Orientation 1 thinkers....They don't just do different, they are different" (pp. 235-236). This epistemological difference may have been reflected in students as well, for example, in Carrie's belief that the assignments were vague; there were no real answers for her. Also, Scot saw only "stuff I didn't know before" which may mean that for him only knowledge was important. He seemed not to see connections or applications to his own life. I was probably a Perceptual Level III thinker as I began teaching. Perhaps Mr. Parsons' desire to organize units incrementally and separately reflected a different way of seeing teaching. However, I do not want to overstate these positions. Unlike the Caines, I think we need all of the stages and categories to be a part of the class at appropriate times. I think we often move among these levels, sometimes directly teaching skills or information, and at other times, letting the students' needs drive the class.

King and Kitchener's research may illuminate the reason for the profound differences in thinking. Their research describes the relationship among education, logic or critical thinking, and reflective thinking. Though critical thinking, inductive

and deductive reasoning are part of intellectual development and serve well in analysis of clearly defined problems, they assert that intellectual development requires more when ill-structured problems are presented. King and Kitchener assert that "more advanced epistemic assumptions," those found in reflective thinking are essential for solving complex problems (1994, p. 190). Deficits in reasoning about ill-structured problems may be caused by inadequate epistemic assumptions, poor inductive or deductive skills or from both. Thus the progress of a teacher through these developmental stages from one to three requires more than knowledge, skills, or materials. King and Kitchener's method for developing reflective judgment parallel learning-centered ideals: Challenge, feedback, safety for risk taking, and practice without fear of penalty or failure (1994, p. 228). It is not surprising that if learning-centered environments work for students, they should for professional development as well.

Because this kind of development or this kind of classroom described by King also includes affect and "the notion that their effectiveness in assisting students to think reflectively may require that they [teachers] attend to the emotional side of learning," it is unfamiliar territory for teachers (1994, p. 247) who define education as a purely cognitive activity. Again, I added to my matrix the conceptualization of Belenky et al. (1986):

Kind of Knowledge	**Well-structured knowledge** (skills, coding) A, B, Cs	**Ill-structured knowledge** Reading literature	**Elaborate Structures** Interpretation
Women's Ways of Knowing (Belenky et al.	**Received** Truth is in the authorities	**Procedural** Ideas are manipulated with logic, empathy, distancing	**Constructed** Connections among all authority, logic,

1986)			self
Stages (Jonassen, 1992)	**Initial Knowledge Acquisition**	**Advanced Knowledge Acquisition**	**Expertise**
Teaching Strategies	practice feedback	coaching mentoring	structuring learning by learner
Assessment	reinforcement testing	collaboration conferences	self-evaluation reflection
Teacher epistemology (Caine, 1997)	**Perceptual Orientation I** See knowledge as quantifiable, as an accumulation of skills	**Perceptual Orientation II** Hierarchical teaching, but emphasize ideas and concepts and facts and skills	**Perceptual Orientation III** Organization is based on making meaning and connections and focusing on critical ideas

However, I had left out Subjective Knowing in my initial matching of these ideas because it did not fit; later I expanded my model to include this personal and perhaps more emotional kind of knowledge. It was clear cognitively demanding tasks could be frightening, for example, with Dani's anger and perhaps Carrie's resistance. King recognizes in his research that teachers need to realize that problems which are not easily defined are "disturbing, frustrating, and even frightening to students" (p. 247). Mr. Parsons' concerns reflected an awareness that not all students would be comfortable doing this task.

Creating a constructivist environment or adding learning-centered approaches appropriately to a learning environment, then, requires a teacher whose epistemology is significantly different from a traditional teacher. Yet, I think that teacher must maintain an empathy for those teachers and students who have not yet reached that level of perception, or who, for that project are not ready to construct knowledge, but instead

who need some guide rails.

In addition, Grimmit divides what he terms the moral "struggle" of teachers to develop. His research revealed that traditional teachers focus on an external system to guide their development, depend on external rewards for motivation, and go by the rule that what is rewarded gets done. Their struggle is "fitting in" (Grimmitt, 1996, p. 56). What he terms alternative teachers have personal growth as their interest. They go by the rule that what is rewarding for them gets done, and are motivated by personal, intrinsic gains. Their struggle is to find what appeals to them. The highest level of struggle is by what Grimmitt calls authentic teachers whose rule is what is moral gets done. Their motivation and involvement go beyond the personal to a higher moral gain. The teacher's struggle is to act morally (pp. 37-65). Again, a caution about the idea of attaining a "higher" level and staying there. I feel the need to fit in, to grow personally, and to act morally can all interact to make a good teacher. As co-teachers, I think each of those needs evidenced themselves during the year. We both compromised, learned, and did truly care about the students. Our struggle with Carrie and Scott show those three behaviors interacting.

In that very painful series of scenes with Carrie and Scot, the emotionally charged aspect of assessment was clear. Alan Ryan, a Canadian researcher, coined the phrase "professional obligement" when teachers "conduct their responsibilities to their various constituencies: students, parents, provincially mandated curriculums, the world beyond the school (especially the institutions of higher learning and future employers) and their own identity as teachers" (Winter 1997, p. 120). When teachers graded students, they wrestled with two views of fairness and equity: the first, to individual

students and their journey of learning and the second, to a competitive system in which they sometimes had to be gatekeepers. Ryan calls assessment "a morally charged act in a morally bound professional life" (p. 134) and he found that these decisions were a function of the teacher's identity as a professional. As Mr. Parsons and I deliberated about grading Scot and Carrie, we were concerned about the immediate goal of grading Carrie and Scot. However, when they both said that they were going to college the next year, perhaps the "good lucks" that we gave them carried with them a bit of judgment about the possibility that they would have to change or they would never survive in college.

Students and Assessment

Ironically, students are rarely asked about their standards nor asked their opinions in public schools. I found that developing assessment standards with students could be as vitalizing for a class as developing assessment standards for a district, state or nation. When our students self-assessed they felt that learning was a function of effort and engagement with the question, not simply a judgment by another of their ability. This belief is obviously good for self-esteem and it also plays out in supporting a risk-taking environment in the class. When students can articulate what a good presentation is, they are part of the learning community.

Placing assessment in the social context humanizes the process. Placing students in this process gives them agency. The changes that we made clearly had a positive impact on our class, the students and the teachers. Objective tests, scientifically calibrated, are reliable: their results are replicable. These tests are not necessarily valid tests of student learning: they do not necessarily test what is learned in class. Variations in judgment are not necessarily flaws. Subjectivity and differences

can make a learning environment richer not poorer. On the other hand, the value of saying that a student is a 90 or a 70 or a 650 does little to promote learning. Grading also puts great demands on students. The following statement is the profound recognition that high performance is not a function of external standards or rules and regulations alone.

> Achievement is co-produced. It is not within the power of schools to ensure high performance by all students unless one assumes schools full of happy, hard working youngsters with high aspirations or schools that function like total institutions, able to control the socialization of their charges and compel the necessary study. But we do not have students or schools like this. What are the key components of the instructional capacity of a school: the intellectual ability, knowledge and skills of teachers and other staff; the quality and quantity of the resources available for teaching, including staffing levels, instructional time, and class sizes; and the social organization of the instruction or instructional culture (Corcoran & Goertz as cited by Smith et al, 1997, p. 101).

Certainly low class sizes, and time for teaching can make positive changes. However, how does a teacher make the culture better for learning? My co-teacher and I struggled for a year, spending extra hours planning and working; hours that most would not be able or willing to spend, and where did we get? Was this the high standard I looked for from others? I can only say that it was as high as we could go and as high as we could get our students to go. Must it be redefined, teacher by teacher, class by class, day by day? My answer is that it must. The course that we developed could never "happen"

again. We might try some of the projects, but the students will shape the class as well.

High Stakes Tests

State Senator Hal Lane said in a recent conference at Worcester State College that if the districts do not show positive change on these MCAS tests, education reform funding will end as of 2001. How can any test be designed to evaluate an entire education, particularly since after 75 years objective tests' flaws are still problematical, and the performance based tests are still in their infancy? Many objections to the tests now exist. For example, research shows that group scores do not reflect growth in learning but reflect socioeconomic status (Haney, 1997, p. 13). In addition, setting standards by external agencies for accountability have shifted teacher effort to teach to the test. In Missouri and in New York, the test became the curriculum (Berliner and Biddle, 1995, pp. 196-7), and the curriculum became static.

I feel that to resolve the dispute between a technically reliable and an authentically valid exam, we need to develop both. Instead of a single exam that determines a student's fate in a single high stakes test, there should be many other indications of a student's performance. Portfolios and capstone courses, presentations across the curriculum, and interdisciplinary projects could add to our knowledge of a student beyond a single performance. Technology's ability to store audio and video records on CDs makes documenting student performances, discussions, debates, group work, and presentations far more possible. Student performances can be recorded as more than a letter or number grade. And these capacities may improve our ability to teach and learn. A report card could show parents a child in the process of learning, reading, writing, working with peers, not a number (Guskey, 1996; Custer, 1996;

Elkind, 1997; Fullen, 1997).

Even though we may recreate a class daily, we also need standards malleable enough to allow for that kind of flexibility, but clear enough so that teachers are confident that they are working in the same direction. I remember meeting a first grade teacher longing for the old system of homogeneous grouping, workbooks, and reading materials carefully written not to challenge readers, but to give them words on their grade level. She spoke about a "pacing schedule." When I asked her what it was, she said the whole school needed to be finished with this book, with this workbook page, and have "mastered" these skills, by specific dates. Everything seemed so organized and orderly. Yet, those learners who at that age naturally construct ideas, were being constricted. The opposite is a class with fluid time and where students define their projects and seek out answers with support. Again, we need to embrace the contraries as Peter Elbow says (1981); we need to participate with empathy and see the strengths and weaknesses of both. Instead of teachers having tests given to them by textbook publishers, they need to be part of their development and modification over time. Technology may make it possible, as is now done in some colleges, for a school to create its own texts, picking and choosing from the best available, and collaborating to share materials.

> Assessment reform, like so many other aspects of contemporary reform, prizes human judgment to a greater degree than in the past. There is a necessary responsibility to warrant that judgment through effective professional development. Intensive support for teachers to meld assessment, instruction, and curriculum is critical to creating the kinds of changes that will transform

> learning. The challenge is for teachers to learn and evolve together in order to ensure that the messages they transmit are defensible and trustworthy (Earl, 1997, p. 167).

I would emphasize the need for ongoing collaboration to sustain growth for teachers, students, curriculum, and instruction. According to research, real change takes more than a good idea and good management or professional development. External efforts in order to change teacher practice have been unsuccessful, but where change has been successful hearts and minds were combined. Fullan's research on systemic change found that to change a staff needed a shared purpose, standards for learning set by external agencies, sustained staff development, and increasing school autonomy. As important, he says, successful change requires "socioemotional support as well as technical assistance" (1997, p. 228).

Our epistemologies are our ways of seeing, understanding, sensing, and feeling the world. If knowledge no longer resides only in the mind, but in the emotions and in connections to real life and to other people, if learning takes place in an active, challenging, yet safe environment where people grapple with ideas and not just passive classrooms, then learning is no longer information or skills which move from simple to complex. Rather, it is a series of overlapping, messy, recursive approximations of knowledge constructed in a social environment. If the mind is no longer a muscle or a computer, but a complex chemical soup in which our minds, bodies, and emotions connect, then our ways of teaching, learning, and assessing must change.

To improve teaching and learning, our discussions must be extended and brought into the everyday conversation of the classroom as conferences and reflections

to guide learning. These deliberations which assess what has been learned and what needs to be learned or done next must be imbedded in the everyday learning environment of both teachers and students.

My recommendations for external evaluation echoes what I have begun in my own district, to develop standards collaboratively. The ability of technology to handle information and to record actual student work can be used to improve assessment within a classroom and to communicate it to external evaluators and to parents. Electronic report cards, probably storing data on CD-ROMS, could show a student's progress through the years. They could show the student as a first grader reading a story, as an eighth grader in a science fair presentation, or as a twelfth grader defending Macbeth's right to be called a tragic hero. Report cards could reflect the complexity of learning. On a less technological level, students could report their progress to parents. Teachers in Auburn now invite parents for conferences during which the students tell the parent about their progress using a portfolio of that quarter's work.

Technology gives schools the ability to communicate and collaborate in real time over long distances through teleconferences and e-mail. I am leading my district to develop and publish models of student work on our web page as we collaborate and articulate our standards. I am working with principals and teachers as they develop interdisciplinary units together for each grade level and present and share them with other teachers. They are working together as teams to find samples of student work and to collaboratively articulate, set, and share standards with their colleagues and with their classes. They are asking their students to develop rubrics with them work throughout the year. This kind of collaboration can allow the learning community to

expand past the classroom and the teacher to parents, buildings, districts, states, and even the nation.

The Impact of My Study

This work in a specific classroom made me aware of the complexity of my responsibility as the director of curriculum and faculty development. To effect the change necessary to reform education for the entire district, I used my new understandings and my new appreciations to develop a methodology with the Administrative Team that encouraged dialogue, hands on experience, self-assessment and performance-based teaching from the teachers themselves. Teachers are constructing interdisciplinary units together, sharing resources, developing assessments, and evaluating their effectiveness. Through this process, all teachers are collaborating to assess, align, and develop the curriculum. In addition, because of my experiences in a classroom, I can put the state's mandates in a different perspective. Our method gives primary consideration to the classroom and the teachers, the place where education happens.

I am a teacher in administrator's clothing. I am a teacher in researcher's clothing. I hope I will always see the children and their learning and even their moments of truth, as the core of what education does. I hope that these multiple roles do not make me a split personality, but instead a better teacher, administrator, and researcher. All that I have done makes a complete and whole picture for me in the classroom, the heart of education where there is no division between the one who knows and the one who does.

From the resistance we encountered to changes that I had thought were improvements, I learned that change must be gradual and flexible. I needed to

recognize that not everyone was ready to construct knowing. From the negotiations that my co-teacher and I made the result was ultimately a better class, not for him, not for me, but for our students. I now realize that we modeled the high standards that we expected for our students: we listened, coached, created new ideas, celebrated others' successes, and worked to construct an environment in which everyone grew. I learned education must be reformed from within, one teacher and one classroom at a time.

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APPENDIX A

COURSE INFORMATION AND POLICY

Deborah Brady — Bridge English — Summer 1996

Dean College

TEXT, MATERIALS: Selected readings, photocopied. 3.5 floppy disk.

ATTENDANCE: Attendance is required for English. Students may be asked to leave the program if they are absent from classes. This course is intensive and participation, practice, and attendance are essential.

ASSIGNMENTS: All writing assignments must be word processed. Double space all writing. Carefully proofread for spelling and mechanics.

PORTFOLIO: The portfolio is a folder containing all writing done during the course. All drafts of all writing will be organized to display each student's progress. In addition to all drafts of all papers, the student will include three reflective essays about their progress as writers written at the beginning, midway, and at the end of the course. Students will be required to revise at least three themes for their portfolio to demonstrate their progress.

GRADE POLICY: Your grade will be averaged from the following:

#1. Nightly reading and reader response essays.
#2. Writing exercises and quizzes in class.
#3. Descriptive essays and revisions.
#4. Narrative essays and revisions.
#5. Documented argument essay and revisions.
#6. Two in-class, timed essays.
#7. Three reflective self-assessment essays about your writing.
#8. Grammar tests: ROS, CS, FRAG and revision of these problems in writing.
#9. Class Participation in discussions, peer reviews, final portfolio presentation.

OVERVIEW: This course is an introduction to college writing.

Week I Descriptive essays, reflective self-evaluation, timed in-class essay.
Week II Narrative essay, argument, midterm self-assessment
Week III Argument essay with research and documentation.
Week IV Revision and editing for portfolio, final self-assessment, timed in-class essay.

Course Syllabus:

Week 1: What is good writing ?

Monday Half hour class: Introduction to course syllabus.
July 15 Assignment: Read "Limbo." Follow directions for reader response.

Tuesday College writing versus high school writing.
July 16 Expectations: attendance, kinds of writing, reading, revision, and portfolio.

In-class writing assignment: How do you write?
Discuss "Limbo" effective use of extended metaphor and description.
Combination of mood and objective reality.

Assignment:

Write: Reader response to this essay, use photocopied sheet as your guide.

Wednesday Read responses to "Limbo." Stereotypical responses: clichés, generalities versus "voice." Seeing through your own eyes, not through conventional wisdom.
Describe classroom. Organizing principles: left to right, up-over-down, time, importance, through a very specific pair of eyes.
Read "Bone" a description, image, reversed order, difficult to understand.
Peer response practice: how to respond: editing versus response.
What's good? How do you make positive suggestions? What if there are problems? How do you address it?

Assignment:

Write: Descriptive essay first draft of cultural object of yours: sneakers, hat, pen, what are its characteristics, what are its meanings from your memory, from your life, from culture.

Thursday Peer group: Read/response/notetaking. Organization of details, symbolism.
July 18 Use Reader Response Form to evaluate your own writing. Summary, effective techniques, suggestions for change.
Words selection: cliché, leveled language, what is apt.

Assignment:

Write Descriptive essay, first draft, or revise first essay: use metaphor, symbol, organizing principle.

Friday Read "The Deer at Providentia" and analyze its techniques as atypical expository form: contrast, shock, juxtaposition, and not traditional form.
July 19 Read "Shame" and analyze its effective techniques as a narrative.
Lesson at beginning, dialogue, and repetition of language.

Assignment:

Write narrative story with a lesson at the beginning or the end.

Use "Shame" as a model.

Week 2: Narration, thesis, and description. Three "tools" of writing.

Monday Read and discuss Boston Globe article on blockbuster movies; an argument about a person's interpretation of the media.

July Play "Hook" by Blues Traveler as an example of a contexturalized argument--connected to experience, not just argued.

Assignment: Write first draft of argument

Tuesday Read student paper. How to revise/respond to others' writing. Well-crafted/ how to revise.

Begin to word process/conference argument essay.

Assignment: Final copy, after reader response.

Wednesday Begin to work on portfolio: include initial writing assessment, midterm writing assessment, description, narrative, argument and all revisions for midterm grade.

Assignment: Work on portfolio.

Thursday Prepare portfolio.

July 20 Assignment: Consider topic for I-Search on media and culture.

Friday Read best work from portfolio. Read excerpt from Beavis and Butthead article.

Discuss what might be interesting topics/personally anchored and contexturalized.

Assignment: Take notes on your awareness of nature versus your culture.

Week 3: Begin the argument and research: Developing voice, using other's ideas, documentation: political correctness, conventional wisdom. Quotes, summaries, paraphrases on selected topic.

Week 4: Preparation of portfolios. Editing, peer response, self-reflection.

Last day: Presentation of all portfolios: All drafts, revisions. Exit exam.

Who You Are as a Writer: Reflective Essay
Purpose: metacognition, awareness of process

Initial self-assessment:

I. Directions: Read over all of the questions below and answer the question in essay form, who are you as a writer? You do not have to answer each question, use these questions to get you started.

Describe who you are as a writer.
Describe both positive and negative experiences with writing throughout school, in particular grades or courses. (Did you have creative writing? Writing about literature? Research papers?)
Because of these experiences how do you think of yourself as a writer? What are your strengths, your weaknesses?
What do you like? Dislike?
Describe your process as a writer: do you do just one draft, do you write long, long papers, do you write notes or an outline before you begin?

[When you finish your essay, reread it. Check it for clarity, for mechanical errors, for accomplishing your purpose. Staple your essay to the top of this sheet.]

Midterm assessment

II. Describe your experiences in the first two weeks of this course. How do you see yourself as a writer now. Show what you have learned by the way that you write this essay. Staple this essay on top of the first essay.

[When you finish your essay, reread it. Check it for clarity, for mechanical errors, for accomplishing your purpose.]

Final assessment:
III. Describe your experiences in writing during this past four weeks. Look over your portfolio Have you changed? Show what you have learned by the way that you write this essay. (Hook, thesis, topic sentences, transitions, conclusions, examples, showing not telling in details, voice, editing.)
[When you finish your essay, reread it. Check it for clarity, for mechanical errors, for accomplishing your purpose.]

"Limbo"
Reader Response Essay Guide.

This kind of assignment asks you to pay attention to HOW you read literature.

Directions: This is the first step in a reader response essay. I hope that you will begin to see your reading in a different way. The essay, "Limbo," is by a student who "sees" old, familiar things in a new way.

Reading the essay carefully:

1. Read the essay from start to finish. Briefly, what is it about?
2. Does it remind you of anything you've ever experienced? Read before?
3. Now look at each paragraph individually.
4. What is the first paragraph about? What is described? How? What is limbo?
5. What is the second paragraph about? What is described? What does the narrator wonder about? What does she "see"?
6. Describe the furnace. What does she think of?
7. Describe the workbench. What does it make her think of?
8. Describe the boxes. What is the irony of "Salvation Army"?
9. Describe the colors of the furniture. What does it make her think of?
10. What happens in the last paragraph? Is this appropriate?

Understanding essay form:

1. What is the thesis? Put it in brackets [ ].
2. What is the organizing pattern of the paragraphs, from the whole to sun, to furnace, to workbench, to salvation army, to furniture colors, to coldness?
3. What method does she use that creates the mood?
4. Underline all of the words that add to the mood. What happens to the sunlight? To the furnace?

Write a paragraph in which you discuss this essay that shows what it means to you, how it works, and evaluate its effectiveness.

Evaluation Form for Expository and Argument Essay

60% **Content, Style:** **The subject and each point are interesting and significant and fulfill the assignment.**

- **Focus for the Whole**: *The Thesis Statement* ***takes a definite position and indicates the focus for the paper.***
- **Focus for Paragraphs:** *The Topic Sentence* ***sets the focus of the entire paragraph. All details relate to it.***
- **Coherence and Transitions**: ***The ideas of the essay are linked clearly and logically. A clear pattern for introducing ideas, transitions, repetitions, and connecting words are used the make the essay cohere.***
- **Organization**: *Introduction, Conclusion, and sequence of body paragraphs.* ***The organizational plan is clear with a clear beginning, a sequence of development, and a conclusion that "revisits" but does not restate the introduction.***
- **Development:** *Through example, description, narration, the ideas are made concrete.*

30% **Diction, Mechanics, Proofreading**

- **Grammar, Punctuation:** *Faulty grammar, mechanical problems , and spelling errors make your ideas more difficult to understand and readers often attribute "carelessness," illiteracy, or lack of ability to students who do not proofread carefully.*
- **ROS , FRAG, CS**, other _____
- **Spelling**
- **Language and diction**: ***Vocabulary, expression, and sentence structure should be appropriate for the kind of writing that you are doing: formal, informal, etc.***

10% **Format and Neatness**

- ***The paper is word processed and double-spaced, there is a title page or heading.***

Comment:_____

_____

Portfolio Content Checklist

Name_____ **Bridge English S-96 Brady**

Reflective Essays

Who I Am as a Writer at the beginning of the course
Who I Am as a Writer at midterm
Who I Am as a Writer at the end of the course

Reader Response Essay

"Limbo" (see procedure, questions, attached to this sheet)

Descriptive Essay of cultural object: comparisons/metaphors, concrete details

Descriptive essay first draft. Title:_____
Descriptive essay final draft

Narrative Essays: Focus in introduction/conclusion, dialogue, and concrete details

First Draft of Narrative Title:_____
Final Draft of Narrative

Argument Essay: Your relationship to the media

First Draft
Title:_____
Final Draft

Researched Argument: I-Search: the media/research/maintaining "voice"

First Draft
Title:_____
Final Draft

Midterm Comment:

_____

_____

Final Comment_____

_____

The Traditional Argument Essay

High School Writing is often "free-writing," summary writing, creative writing, but rarely expository prose. English Composition at Dean, one perspective:

Introduction: "Hook"
Catch the reader's attention: quote, anecdote, old saying, unexpected reversal....Introduction to the idea

Thesis: an arguable statement; not a fact, a position.

Body Paragraph(s)
Topic sentence (Transitional expression)
Details relate to the thesis and develop the topic sentence with: anecdotes, examples, descriptions, definitions, etc.
Transitional Sentence: relates this topic to the next
Organizational choices:
Increase in drama, in size, in seriousness, put in chronological order, put in spatial order, compare, contrast, pro/con, etc.

Conclusion

Not a restatement of the thesis, but an amplification.
Not a summary of what has been stated, but a deeper reflection.
"Revisit thesis," broaden perspective

REVISION: The infinite possibility for improvement.
Recursive: A second perspective, a process that is non-linear and "messy."
Writing does not begin with a perfectly formed outline.
It is not a step by step process.
Voice and audience: writing is easy; writing is difficult.

It requires both LEFT and *right* brain "perspectives."

logic	creativity
organization	chance
clear	rich, senses
sequential	random
parts	whole
rules	freedom

The Battle of Left and Right (Peter Elbow)

To write is to overcome a certain resistance: you are trying to overcome a demon that sits in your head. But if you actually win, you are in trouble, for in transforming that resistant force into a limp noodle, somehow you turn your words into limp noodles, too. Somehow the force that is fighting you is also the force that gives life to words. Picture two writers, one with only control, the other with only power. It will take the obedient writer effort to get power; it will take the creative writer effort to gain control.

APPENDIX B

Matrix of Assessments

ASSESSMENTS	METHODS OF RECORDING DATA	END OF SEMESTER III	BEGINNING OF SEMESTER IV	MID TERM GRADES	FINAL GRADES	AFTER THE COURSE ENDED	INFORMALLY THROUGHOUT THE QUARTER
Conferences							
• between Mr. P. and Researcher	taping, field notes	▪ Evaluating Quarterly Exam ▪ April 4	▪ Grading third quarter papers ▪ Paul/1. ▪ April 7	▪ May 2	▪ May 30 ▪ Seniors ▪ June 13 ▪ Juniors		▪ May 10 ▪ Playbill grading ▪ May 30 ▪ June 10 ▪ June 13
• between teachers and students: goal setting, evaluation	student list of goals		▪ Collected April 8		▪ Seniors ▪ May 21-26 ▪ Juniors ▪ May 27-30 (project) ▪ June 10-13 ▪ (final)		
• among four teachers	taping	▪ April 6				▪ June 13	
• memos	Field notes						▪ Weekly
							▪
Essays, individual work	photocopied or collected	▪ Third Quart	▪ Puppet Shows	▪ Final Proje	▪ Consequential Pursuit: Game		▪ Third quarter finals

		er finals: April 4	April 7-10 ▪ Playbills ▪ April 11	cts ▪ Seniors: May 21-26 ▪ Juniors ▪ May 27-30	and reflection ▪ June 12		▪ Projects, Consequential Pursuit Game, evaluations, presentations
• reflective essays	photocopied or collected						▪ Third quarter exams (juniors and seniors) ▪ Projects (juniors and seniors) ▪ Finals (juniors)
• formal essays	photocopied or collected						▪ Third quarter exams (juniors and seniors) ▪ Projects (juniors and seniors)
• creative writing	photocopied or collected						▪ Third quarter exams (juniors and seniors) ▪ Projects (juniors and seniors) ▪ Finals (juniors)

• time line	photocopied or collected						▪ Option for projects
• tests	photocopied or collected						▪ Third Quarter exam ▪ Playbill (for puppet show) ▪ Consequential Pursuit (questions to review the entire semester)
• quizzes	photocopied or collected						▪ Daily report for final projects
• presentations	photocopied or collected						▪ Puppet shows (juniors and seniors) ▪ Projects (juniors and seniors)
• student self-assessment and goal setting	photocopied or collected						▪ Daily reports on projects ▪ Final projects (juniors and seniors) ▪ Finals (juniors)
							▪
group work							▪
• group projects	taped						▪ Puppet Shows

and presentations							
• class time lines	taped						▪ None done by group
Parents, former teachers, former students							
• questionnaire	questionnaire analyzed by category			▪ ▪ April 1 sent hom e			
• interview	taped or field notes						▪ One parent June 19
Informal assessments	field notes						▪
• weekly observation of teacher assessments							▪ Mr. Parsons and researcher discussed daily
• weekly observation of student self assessments							▪ Mr. Parsons and researcher discussed daily

APPENDIX C

CONTINUUM OF ASSESSMENT METHODS

	TRADITIONAL ASSESSMENT	LEARNING-CENTERED ASSESSMENT
Who assesses?	Teacher as authority	Teacher as facilitator
The student's role	The student is a passive receiver of knowledge from texts and teachers	Student self-assessment Peer assessments The student actively constructs knowledge by connecting to past knowledge interactions with others, teachers and students.
What is assessed?	Knowledge, skills	Knowledge, skills, and performances in "real world tasks"
When does assessment take place?	At the end of teaching to evaluate (and rank) how much the student has mastered or learned.	Assessment is ongoing to help the teacher and student to improve learning
Where are assessments kept?	They are often kept hidden in a secure place	Fewer tests are kept from view. Portfolios are always available. Conversation is a

		kind of assessment. Learning is ongoing; assessment is embedded in learning
What are the standards?	The bell curve	Standards are made public through task analysis and rubrics.
	Reliability is valued over validity Subjective data is "soft"	Authenticity is valued over reliability and objectivity

APPENDIX D

Final Self-designed Project

(with as much or as little direction as you feel necessary)

Listed below are some suggestions. Some are complete projects for those of you who like everything clearly stated. Some are topics. Whatever you choose, Mr. Parsons and I will work with you to find materials.

1.. (Structured and formal)Pick your favorite era. Read about it in at least two of the sources in the classroom: Arts and Ideas and any other of the history of art and music books. Compare its music, art, and literature ways to the present era. Put this together in a form that shows the contrast, this could be a notebook, a journal, a poster divided in two. Do something creative that "translates" some work of art into your way of seeing things: write a poem, paint, sculpt, sing.

2.. (Favorite idea as focus) Pick an idea or an artist that you want to know more about. (Mozart, Michelangelo, DaVinci, philosophy, Japanese and Chinese art, music and literature) It could be something that you have already spent a great deal of time on. Add all of the elements from the preceding page, read, write, create, translate, etc.

3.. Make your own video that incorporates all of the required elements.

4.. Finish your time line for the Baroque, Neo-Classical, Romantic, and Contemporary Eras. Make sure you include all of the elements above, but you can be really creative: make shadowboxes, posters, mobiles, etc.

5.. Do a directed study. If you do not want to create each of the assignments, work each day with Mr. P or Mrs. B.. This can be in a small group.

6.. ???? Make a suggestion! Write an opera or a puppet show. Create a Gothic cathedral or a castle.

Final Quarter: Goal Setting, Select Topic for Self-Designed Project

Directions: Write out your answers to the questions below. Be prepared to discuss them with Mrs. Brady and Mr. Parsons this week in an individual conference.

1.) What do you think you have accomplished this (third) semester?

2.) What would you like to work on last semester? If you could study anything, what would you study?

3.) How would you like this project structured—would you like to work independently in a directed study,
or would you like very specific assignments and readings,
or a bit of both.

On the next page there is a list of possible projects, the page after that is a chart and summary of the kinds of activities that need to be in the project: reading, writing, art, literature, music, etc. What MIGHT you like to do?

Final Quarter Projects: Expectations, Examples

Goals of course	Unit Theater: Death of a Salesman, J.B., the Book of Job, Faust, Moliere	Activity: Personally designed project Your topic(s) _____	Activity: Odyssey of the Mind (Juniors)
Reading: research	Miller: Tragedy of the Common Man		
Reading: literature	Portions of Death.., J.B., Job, Faust, Moliere		
Writing: reflection	Heroes: your own		
Writing: formal	Heroes in literature		
Writing: creative	If I were… I would have or…..		
Transformation from one genre to another	Illustrate an heroic act		
Time line	What does the contemporary "time line" look like to you in your memory?		
Music response: tape, write words to familiar tune, etc.	* option		
Art response: draw sketch	*		
Comparison/Contrasts between eras	*		
Connections between you and artists, eras, philosophies	**		
Group work	Skit of one play		

APPENDIX E

Humanities: Arcadia Project

I. Goals and objectives of Humanities

Understand the relationship between art, science, literature, history, and philosophy through the centuries.
Understand the relationship between the past and the present and you.
Know thyself.

By the end of the year what will you know, understand?
By the end of the year what will you have done?

II. Where do Arcadia and learning styles fit into this course?

III. Time lines:

This class', period one's
Your own using what you need to remember
Your personal record of this course: Learning Log.
How?

IV. Goal for this Friday:

1. Write a paper (2-page minimum) which explains the play.
(You can be creative about its form: a review, a play, and a formal essay.)

Develop a thesis: What is the play about? (Imagine *you're* the person who is going to prepare a class to see the play. Would you juggle? Did you explain it to a friend? A parent?)
Give three substantive examples
Use examples from
The play
The set
The characters
The presentation before class
The play book (excellent resource)
Develop an interesting introduction
At least three major ideas WITH QUOTES
And a conclusion that discusses how this issue is resolved at the end of the play.

2. Begin the class timeline and your own timeline (one should help the other)

How do you represent the nineteenth century?

How do you represent the twentieth century?

Think visually, philosophically, use words, images
names, dates, your imagination.

3. Schedule:

Monday: Class discussion of all of the themes in the play

Tuesday: Begin to develop timeline: What should be included based upon Arcadia? Clothesline with clothespins for centuries? What to suspend? Mobiles? Objects? We can continue to add through the year. Groups? (Begin to work on papers if you have time.)

Wednesday: Rough draft of your essay. Be prepared to read your "working" thesis aloud to whole class and to work in a dyad or triad to revise paper.

Thursday: Begin timeline. (Work on papers.) Check structure/examples.

Friday: Papers are due

Monday: Talk about learning styles and this course (Know thyself).

4. What is Arcadia about? ("It's wanting to know that makes us matter." Hannah.)
There is no RIGHT ANSWER, but there are well-thought-out and well-written answers.

Consider:

Gardens: What is the point of all of this?

Time
History (Byron--fierce individualist, passionately follow ideals)
Sex
Chaos (small changes in the initial situation can result in wildly divergent results)/Newton (a "clockwork" universe)
A soap opera
Juggling metaphor: many things, but take it as a whole, then it is about.....
Waltz : Describe the way the last scene resolves the two stories. (Get photocopy of last pages if necessary.)
Satire
Thinking versus feeling (combining both is best)
Look at it as a traditional story: what is the climax? The resolution with the waltz?
This is a story of chaos: Newton found an orderly universe for very large and very small phenomena, but people live in the seemingly chaotic area between along

with weather, raindrops, etc.

The Second Law of Thermodynamics: a universe that is dead at the end, without heat (steam engine).
Entropy: life all goes from order to chaos, but cannot reverse (rice pudding)
It is a story of character and character parallels and contrasts.
It is a story of love and lust.
It is a story about how much we distort history. (Consider the mystery, The Arrow of Time, Byron.)
It is a story (soap opera) about the decline of thought into feeling (the ridiculous Gothic gardens, the affairs, the difficulty of loving, Thomasina(?))
It is a story about "two vibrant lives lived with passion and vitality that seemingly passed into history unknown and unremembered by future generation. Chaos theory allows us to see that those lives, and all our lives, are like the flap of a butterfly's wing." (Intro. to Arcadia, 2)

Some (perhaps) helpful quotes:

" It doesn't matter if everybody doesn't get everything," Stoppard

Valentine: We are at the beginning again, knowing almost nothing. People were talking about the end of physics. Relativity and quantum looked as if they were going to clean out the whole problem between them. A theory of everything. But they only explained the very big and the very small. The universe, the elementary particles. The ordinary-sized stuff which is our lives, the things people write poetry about--clouds--daffodils--waterfalls--and what happens in a cup of coffee when the cream goes in--these things are full of mystery, as mysterious to us as the heavens were to the Greeks.

Bernard: A great poet is always timely. A great philosopher is an urgent need. There is no rush for Isaac Newton. We were quite happy with Aristotle's cosmos. Personally, I prefer it. Fifty-five crystal spheres geared to God's crankshaft is my idea of a satisfying universe. I can't think of anything more trivial than the speed of light.

Hannah: Don't let Bernard get to you. It's only performance art. Rhetoric. They used to teach it in ancient times, like PE. It's not about being right, they had philosophy for that. Rhetoric was their talk show. Bernard's indignation is a sort of aerobics for when he gets on television.

APPENDIX F

Third Quarter Exam

Classical/Romantic/Impressionist/Modern

Directions: Select one work of each literature, art (or architecture or sculpture), and music that you feel can be grouped or linked in soy. For example select theme that you like. Select three from your favorite era. Select three works that you dislike, or provocative works, works that are beautiful or aesthetically unpleasant. These works can come from the same era or from different eras.

Describe each work and explain how it represents (or does not represent) the era.
Reflect on each piece. Why did you select these three?
Write a draft of an essay. Share it with someone (including a teacher).

Write a paper that has

- a theme or thesis which unifies all three works (beauty, harmony, dissonance, emotion)
- a poem or a selection from something we have read
- a work of art, sculpture, or architecture
- a selection of music
- an explanation of how each fits into the era
- a reflection on each
- proofread

- Illustrate one or all of the works: use words, your own drawing, collages, etc.

Some possibilities:

- Do you think that the Classical Era was when the "rules" were made, the Romantic, when they began to be broken, and the Modern when "thing fall apart" as in Yeats' poem. give examples to prove or disprove.

- What appeals to you? Just pick them out from your notes, timeline, memory, or art books. Then figure out what you like. Do you like people who follow the rules or break them. Do you like tranquillity or emotion. Do you like conformity or the individuality of the Romantic Era.

- You will have three days to complete this
- A Exceptional work, many ideas, well stated, reflection, connections, thesis
- Good solid work, good ideas. all parts answered
- C Adequate work most things are completed
- D below average.: some missing parts
- F: not done

APPENDIX G

Self-evaluation/Final Conference

Name: _____ Date due:_____ Time: _____

Directions:
1. Set up a time for discussing your final project.
2. Bring this form, filled out, with you to that meeting.

Use the following descriptions to decide on what you believe your grades should be for the final project and final quarter.

A= Outstanding, superior, excellent
B= Good, solid work
C= Average work, perhaps some things are missing
D= Work is not fully done
F= Incomplete or missing

The categories may overlap. For example, creative writing may be your transformation.

Categories	A	B	C	D	F
Research					
Reflection					
Formal Writing					
Creative Writing					
Transformation					
Comparison/Contrast					
Daily Work					
Project as a Whole					
Other: (growth, motivation, helping others)					
Quarter Grade (Include play, playbill)					

Explain why you think these should be your grades in at least 3 sentences.

Evaluate this course. Have you learned anything, changed, appreciated something new? (At least 3 sentences.)

APPENDIX H

Student Grades and Evaluative Comments

Student	Self evaluations	Self evaluations	Teacher evaluations	Comments about grades	3rd qtr	play	project	junior	final
Carrie	"Learned to appreciate music" Final project: A great deal of information, neat	"Valuable information found too late...the story of my senior year." Reflection "Surprised" at interesting information.	No connections, no transformation, No creativity: Information not connected. Research just for information	Senioritis ? How will she do in college? Off task a great deal.	73	60	80		70
Katie	Literal: story of picture. Perceptive descriptions of art: Warhol, Impressionists Creativity: alien paper, musician	Good questions for game.	Some very good work. Very conscientious. Often literal. Difficulty reflecting.		83	66	88	90	85
Mark	Very intuitive Very philosophical Excellent research Very creative	Alien paper was outstanding	Late, missing assignments, frequent absences "I'm lazy."	Had ability, but difficult to keep focused. Changed presentations so that he could do this alone.	84	66	70		65
Amy C	Consistently outstanding work. Follies Bergere Goya I am Beethoven Test quarter	Reflective, creative, literate, deep "These things that are heart breaking"	But sometimes late, unfinished assignments		83	73	100		95

Cate	Creative: Sistine a la Kate, 20th century a la Kate Ryders to the Sea Hell	Final video, audio, journal	Sometimes late, scattered Loves hands on.		93	93	100		100
Jay	Castle Foursome	Mr. Parsons: makes sure he has everything	He became independent. Tried very hard		92	97	98		98
Gwen	Everyman Real growth at the end	Tried real hard Will not forget what I learned Own choices (like this class) Hard time taking orders Independent "In this class when I was told to break all of the rules and do what I want, I was very lost I didn't know what to do with myself"	Hard time seeing generalizations Literal Hard time reflecting until the end Became open minded		81	86	88	95	92
Scot	Resistance: exit interview, yeah three times	I didn't change much but I learned new things	Literal: things fall apart: car accident Directly instructions to work: unusual		68	81	55		60
John	Moments of ability.	Took a lot more from this class than any other E class.	Minimal Two days' work in two weeks. Often off task. Humor?	He'd rather be golfing	83	80	65		70
Amy J	JB Bubonic plague Creative writing is excellent Little kid playbill	Reflection on group work	" Earned these grades because I worked hard" respect for arts and humanities A+ to course	Outstanding work, conscientious,	98	89	97		97
Spencer	Leonardo essay is outstanding: ironic, connected, creative	"Tell so much from one single piece of art" laid back and fun worked hard	Korean Soon influence other countries instead of others influencing	Outstanding, creative, conscientious	97	97	98	100	100

			them						
Francine	Gothic cathedral Puppets for Ryders	"Appreciate the arts." How to do projects in all learning types.	I earned these grades because I put a lot of effort into my work		92	97	99		98
Dani	Reflection on classical and romantic	At beg: "is this what you want?"	History/art class in Switzerland: learned many things I concentrated on a few special things. I broke the rules	Exchange student from Switzerland	97	95	98		98
Sarah L	Poppy Baltimore waltz 20th century	Sensitive, artistic, intelligent		Outstanding work.	96	91	98		96
Tony	A bit off: final not in order, terrorism, no connection No reflections		Absent lots of time Little effort No reflection		68	73	60	40	60
Ryan	Video of Beat Generation: song, analysis	Seeing a work of art and really knowing the story. It was amazing people cried when sox were dying. "Thank you for putting up with me."	Feels not intelligent, bad influence Cut other classes, absent only once To have a voice that is heard may seem easy, but to have a voice that is understood is more worthwhile.	Outstanding, but does not seem to know it.	98	71	100		90
Andy	Relationship Mozart and Beethoven nazi	C/C in interview ideal form so muscular, taller, propaganda. I didn't know how I was going to put it tog.	Hitler: idealized. "Worked hard." Different. Every day was		55	97	96		96

			an adventure. Different point of view, past and present						
Tara		Worked hard daily. Spent time.	A lot of work		95	98	98	95	96
Amy S	Did a good final: none of her, though	Remember puppet show: like paper dolls	Could have done more		91	88	90		90
Tim	Castle: no reflection, still concrete	Loved: freedom, essays instead of tests and quizzes and being creative			89	73	95	83	89
Sarah S	Literal, concrete until last project, but totally immersed	This class was cool	I wont forget anything I worked really hard. I worked to my fullest ability	SPED diagnose d reading, language disability	89	86	98	92	93
Amie T	Difficulty getting organized and being confident that she could do anything				85	97	70	95	88
Jessica	Literal	No reflection, creativity	A lot of work, as far as she can No reflection, no connection No Jessica's voice		73	88	82		84
Maryelle n	Little effort				67	88	82		84
Jen W	Mona Lisa It's just a flower to Mona	Hard on myself	Fun, not what I expected. Worked hard	Worked hard	91	88	94		92
				Total A					15
				Total B					4
				Total C					2
				Total D					
				Total F					

APPENDIX I

Sample Assessment Conversation with Analytical Marginal Comments

[P^2 represents Mr. Parsons.]

Course evaluation: others' standards	Me:	Charlie [who taught the other humanities course] said yesterday that if we had had their students we would have given the course they gave. I think that's probably true. Do you think we got to the same place?
(Celebration of our success)	P^2	Oh yeah.
	Me	We had the quiet, passive kids. They had the outgoing ones. Here are some things [printouts] from the web on Picasso for Sarah.
	P^2	John is doing Picasso, too.
	Me	Oh yeah, Guernica.
Course evaluation: *Materials, lack of*	P^2	Look what I found. <u>What Makes It a Picasso</u>? It's really cool.
	Me	Look at the …..(looking at book that surveys Picasso's career)
	P^2	They can share that. I had to get it.
Course evaluation: Not enough art	Me	I spent so much on this course. I'll donate the books.
	P^2	Where did you find books?
(Celebration of our course's and class' success)	Me	Remainders and Foozles.
Standards, others	P^2	I was looking in Barnes and Nobel and most of it was too historical. They didn't have any humanities, more world history. I want to build up those materials.
	Me	I thought the art room would have a ton of stuff [for us to use]. The students really need to see it and feel ---like this blue for Picasso. Those little art books—what if they had individual artists for the visual arts—like you did with music. I only had them do the docent thing [speak about a painting to the rest of the class]—with one painting just a few days. They did so much. It's just what your wife said. She said at the beginning of every year you can't believe you'll ever get to where you ended at the end of the year before.
Course evaluation: Struggle to reach standards	P^2	She did say that. I can't believe it. Things have gone well finally [for her this year]. She had had years of the more difficult students. She said to the principal: "I cant fix everything."
Student evaluation: Dani's change and attaining a standard: connection, voice, creativity	Me	It's such a struggle teaching all year. In my last literature class. When they took their final, I was so amazed that they did it. It's such a struggle. You know where you're aiming, but you never think they'll reach it.

(Celebration)	P^2	I was talking to Marie [the math teacher] and how much Dani's changed!
Student(s) evaluation	Me	Dani—and he's writing a poem.
Students: peer group influence	P^2	Right where he came from [Switzerland] they said you do this, you do that.
	Me	And [at the beginning of the year] he'd ask: "Is this what you want?"
Student evaluation: Student-centered, flexible for different students	P^2	I think he's been hanging out with the right kids.
	Me	Ryan and Sarah. That play. Don't you think that was the big change?
Course evaluation: Risk Flexibility	P^2	I was a little nervous at the beginning. Just because they couldn't settle on anything. I knew they were searching for the right thing for them. I'm so glad they found that play and that it came from them.
Flexibility in assignments	Me	That process. That risk. Even if they had major problems....they, well you made major accommodations... let them...
Student evaluation Ryan: unmotivated elsewhere, never missed our class (Celebration) (Celebration) *Student evaluation Ryan: outsider*	P^2	I gave them some extra time and time to go upstairs. When I was chasing Carrie. .... (A senior who cut class and Mr. P^2 tracked down. She hadn't been signed out.) She [the nurse] said Ryan is okay during his sport, I think it's hockey. But if it's not that he's hardly in class. I said: "He's hardly ever out of our class." She said: "Consider yourself fortunate. He must really like your class."
	Me	Isn't that amazing. So sad. He's so perceptive
Student evaluation: Peer groups	P^2	That's what I told her. He has great ideas.
	Me	Yesterday when I was in the library he said sarcastically [to the librarian]: "Can we use the books?" [Because she wouldn't let him use the Internet when there were three computers vacant]?" He is a rebel. The kids that are on the edge. You know there's a clique of the "smart kids" then the margins, then the "socially elite," the athletes and cheerleaders, then some that are "fringy" but artistic and bright but maybe [have] no social status. It seems to me this course gives them a chance. I wonder how well they get along with others. And then there's a group that seems not to have to do anything.
Student evaluation: Mary Ellen: (Celebration)	P^2	Mary Ellen [a student who had not been motivated before] is doing all kinds of stuff.
Assessment: self-assessment for students	Me	I wonder what turned her around. I'd like to have the kids do a self-assessment. How do you want to structure that?
Collaboration on assessments	P^2	As part of their final?
Assessment Conferences for students	Me	It could just be a ...I started....I'd like them to look at how they were in class. Would you like them to...? And ask them how did you do on this project? And what grade you think you should have. Then the whole year.
Scheduling		Maybe...three...ummm.maybe that's not too creative...
Assessment: grading		

group projects

Assessment: grading individual components of individual projects

Grading standards

P^2 I think if you can include key words like that, like grades, like group work

Me What if I take the original assignment and change it around and let them self-assess it?

P^2 OK. That'd be great. So with the seniors. They're almost done……...Monday a class trip. Then…..

Me It's [the course] almost done. What if we have conferences for ten minutes each? Five on Friday, Tuesday, Thursday

P^2 Realistically we can get 4 done a class.

Me OK 4,4, and 4 how about self-assessment? I'll type it up and we can talk about it tomorrow.

P^2 OK. Let's finish the playbill grades.

Me The Cinderella group. We gave them a B?

P^2 But Tara and Spencer were gone [on an excused absence].

Me [Looking at Tara's playbill.] No summary. It looks nice. We could ask her…..

P^2 Spencer did a nice job on his playbill. An A?

Me Yes. They [the rest of the group] were OK. An 80 [for Tara]? Want me to read this? [Reads Spencer's additional assignment because he had been absent for the play's performance. He did this for an individual grade.]

P^2 Cool.

Me Very mature. Good. Clear comparison. Both stories [versions, one a Victorian rendition, one a Chinese rendition] of Cinderellas were well written…. Good. Should I …

P^2 96? It's not a playbill.

Me Sounds fair.

[Bell rings.]

APPENDIX J

PUPPET SHOWS
PLAYBILLS

This project has two parts. The first one is a group project; the second is an individual project.

Select your own group for this project.

I.. Select a play from those available in the room which include but don't have to be limited to the following:

Death of a Salesman (modern tragedy)
Ryders to the Sea (modern tragedy)
J.B. (modern tragedy)
Cinderella (a Victorian version)
Death Knocks (Woody Allen comedy)
Four Guys (Theater of the Absurd)

- Divide up the responsibilities
- Everyone is an actor in the play and everyone has another responsibility
- Stage manager: keeps thing going, writes and edits play for the 20-minute performance, and introduces the play and era to the audience
- Dramatic Director: makes sure every line is delivered well and that the movements make sense to the audience
- Artistic Director: responsible for sets and costumes appropriate for the era

You will have a week to prepare. We will videotape the performances in the Chorus Room or the media center, or at home if you prefer.

You will be evaluated as a group on the performance, the creativity, the organization, and for your daily work.

II. Playbill: On the day of your performance each person is responsible for a playbill. Use 8 x 11 1/2 paper and fold it in half. On the front put the title of the play and illustrate it. Include the playwright's name. Inside include a brief synopsis of the plot, identify its era, write a brief description of each of the main characters and the person who plays the part. Embellish it in any way you want, with advertisements, and brief biographies of the actors, etc., but make the style appropriate for the play that you are doing. You will be evaluated on the accuracy of the synopsis, character descriptions and era designation. Creativity counts, too!

Junior Projects

Consequential Pursuit Game Cards

CONSEQUENTIAL PURSUIT QUESTION ANCIENT GREECE	ANSWER ANCIENT GREECE
❖ MUSIC	❖ MUSIC
❖ ART	❖ ART
❖ LITERATURE	❖ LITERATURE
❖ THEATER	❖ THEATER
❖ PHILOSOPHY/HISTORY	❖ PHILOSOPHY/HISTORY
❖ ARCHITECTURE	❖ ARCHITECTURE

Consequential Pursuit

1.. Use the chart provided and write six questions and answers for each era that we have studied. Each era must have a (clever, interesting, creative, funny) question for art, literature, music, philosophy/history, theater, and architecture.

Use your time lines, the texts in the room, members of the class, and the teachers as resources. We will play this game on the last day of class. See if you can stump your friends. (This beats a final, doesn't it!!!)

Reflective Essay

2.. For the last day. Write a two-page reflective essay. Choose the era you most identify with and explain your connections to it. Include an example of art, music, and one example you choose that is representative of that era. Consider the many ways in which you connect or do not to the era and the examples. Organization, a clear focus, specific examples and connections are all important. Don't forget to proof read! Find a peer reviewer.

When would you have liked to have lived? With which era do you identify? With whom would you have liked to have tea, a soda, and a conversation. What would you like to have done during the era. Sung with Mozart? Painted with Michelangelo? Discussed reality with Plato? Built a Gothic cathedral? Been a king, queen, or minstrel?

APPENDIX K

English Language Arts Frameworks Strands

Massachusetts English/Language Arts Curriculum Frameworks
Self-evaluation in a Humanities class

Strand	Standard #	Description of Standard	11/12 grade activities	Assessment D. Brady 0-4	Assessment P. Parsons 0-4
Language	1	Use agreed-upon rules for informal and formal discussions in small and large groups.	Use professional guidelines to evaluate others' discussions Generate rubrics in class	3	4
Language	2	Pose questions, listen to the ideas of others, and contribute their own information or ideas in group discussions and interviews in order to acquire new knowledge.	Analyze differences in responses to group discussion in an organized, systematic way	4	4
Language	3	Make oral presentations that demonstrate appropriate consideration of audience, purpose, and the information to be conveyed.	Deliver formal oral discussions using clear enunciation, gestures, tone, vocabulary, and organization appropriate for a particular audience.	4	4
Language	4	Acquire and use correctly an advanced reading vocabulary of English words, identifying meanings through an understanding of word relationships	Understand connotation, denotation and relationship among shades of meaning	3	4
Language	5	Identify, describe, and apply knowledge of the structure of the English language and standard English conventions for sentence structure, usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.	Identify and apply ALL conventions of standard English	3	3
Language	6	Describe and analyze how oral dialects differ from each other in English, how they differ from written standard English, and what role standard American English plays in informal and formal communication.	Identify when differences between standard and non-standard dialects are a source of negative or positive stereotypes among social groups	2	2
Language	7	Describe and analyze how the English language has developed and been influenced by other languages	Explain and evaluate the influence of the English language on world literature and world communication	3	3
Average	Language			3.1	3.4
Literature	8	Decode accurately and understand new words encountered in their reading materials drawing on a variety of strategies as needed ant then use these words accurately in speaking and writing.	Use their knowledge of literary allusions to understand their meaning when used in other literary works	3	4

Literature	9	Identify the basic facts and essential ideas in what they have read, heard, or viewed.	Identify, evaluate and synthesize the essential issues or ideas in what they have read, heard, or viewed, and explain why the focusing, planning, monitoring, and assessing strategies they used were effective in helping them learn from a variety of texts.	3	4
Literature	10	Demonstrate an understanding of the characteristics of different genres.	Identify and analyze characteristics of genres such as satire, parody, allegory, and pastoral that overlap or cut across the lines of basic genre classifications such as poetry, prose, drama, novel, short story, essay, or editorial	2	3
Literature	11	Identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of theme in literature and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.	Apply knowledge of the concept that the theme or meaning of a selection represents a view of life or a comment on life and locate evidence in the text to support their understanding of a theme.	3	4
Literature	12	Identify, analyze and apply knowledge of the structure, elements and meaning of non-fiction or informational material and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.	Analyze, evaluate , and apply knowledge of how authors use such elements of fiction as point of view, characterization and irony for specific rhetorical and aesthetic purposes	2	3
Literature	13	Identify, analyze and apply knowledge of the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.	Analyze, explain, and evaluate how authors use the elements of nonfiction to achieve their purposes.	2	3
Literature	14	Identify, analyze and apply knowledge of the structure, elements and theme of poetry and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding.	Analyze and evaluate in poetry the appropriateness of diction, imagery, and figurative language—including understatement, overstatement, irony, and paradox	2	3
Literature	15	Identify and analyze how an author's choice of words appeals to the senses, creates imagery, suggests mood, and sets tone.	Identify how an author's or scriptwriter's use of words creates tone and mood, and analyze and evaluate how the choice of words advances the theme or purpose of the work.	2	3
Literature	16	Compare and contrast similar myths and narratives from different cultures and geographic regions.	Analyze and evaluate how authors over the centuries have used archetypes drawn from myth and tradition in literature, film, religious writings, political speeches, advertising, and/or propaganda	2	2
Literature	17	Interpret the meaning of literary works, non-fiction, films, and	Analyze the moral and	3	4

		media by using different critical lenses and analytic techniques.	philosophical arguments represented in novels, films, plays, essays, or poems; an author's political ideology, as portrayed in a selected work, or collections of works, or archetypal patterns found in works of literature and non-fiction.		
Literature	18	Plan and present effective dramatic readings, recitations, and performances that demonstrate appropriate consideration of audience and purpose	. Demonstrate understanding of the functions of playwright, director, technical designer and actor by writing, directing, designing, and/or acting in an original play.	4	4
Average	Literature			2.3	3.2
Composition	19	Write compositions with a clear focus, logically related ideas to develop it, and adequate supporting detail	Write coherent compositions with a clear focus, adequate detail, and well-developed paragraphs, and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies they used to generate and organize their ideas.	3	4
Composition	20	Select and use appropriate genres, modes of reasoning, and speaking styles when writing for different audiences and rhetorical purposes.	Use effective rhetorical strategies and demonstrate understanding of the elements of discourse (purpose, speaker, audience, form) when completing expressive, persuasive, informational, or literary writing assignments	3	4
Composition	21	Improve organization, content, paragraph development, level of detail, style, tone, and word choice in revising their compositions.	Revise their writing to improve style, word choice, sentence variety, and subtlety of meaning after rethinking how well they have addressed questions of purpose, audience, and genre.	2	2
Composition	22	Use their knowledge of standard English conventions for sentence structure, usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling to edit their writing.	Use all conventions of standard English to edit their writing	3	4
Composition	23	Use self-generated questions, note-taking, summarizing, precis writing, and outlining to enhance learning when reading or writing.	Use their own questions, notes, summaries, and outlines to integrate learning across academic disciplines	3	4
Composition	24	Use open-ended research questions, different sources of information, and appropriate research methods to gather information for their research projects.	Formulate their own open-ended questions to explore a topic of interest, design and carry out their research, and evaluate the quality of each research paper in terms of the adequacy of its questions, materials, approach, and	3	4

			documentation of sources.		
Composition	25	Develop and use rhetorical, logical, and stylistic criteria for assessing final versions of their compositions or research projects before presenting them the varied audiences.	Individually develop and use criteria for assessing their own work across the curriculum, explaining why the criteria are appropriate before applying them	3	4
Average	Comp.			2.9	3.9
Media	26	Obtain information by using a variety of media and evaluate the quality of the information obtained	Select appropriate electronic media for research and evaluate the quality of information obtained.	3	4
Media	27	Explain how techniques used in electronic media modify traditional forms of discourse for different aesthetic and rhetorical purposes.	Identify the aesthetic effects of a media presentation and identify and evaluate the techniques used to create them.	2	3
Media	28	Design and create coherent media productions with a clear focus, adequate detail, and consideration of audience and purpose.	Use media to demonstrate understanding of the social or political philosophy of several major writers of a particular historical period or literary movement, or on a particular public issue	3	3
Average	Media			2.3	3.0

APPENDIX L

Parent Survey

Dear Parents/Guardians:

This survey is to obtain your perceptions about the Auburn Public Schools and its impact on your children and your family. This first yearly survey focuses on the "exit" years, when students are leaving primary, elementary, middle or high school. It also focuses on the English/Language Arts Program and report cards. Next year the surveys will focus on other academic areas and will continue follow up on some of the areas begun here. The results of this survey will provide valuable information that will be used to help us evaluate and improve our programs.

Please indicate the grade level for which you are reporting.

___Grade 2 ___Grade 5 ___Grade 8 __Grade 12

Thank you for your participation.

I. Directions: Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the statement by putting an X in the appropriate column. If the question does not apply, skip it. If you need more room, please write on the back of these forms.

S.A = Strongly Agree **A** = Agree **N** = **Neutral, No opinion** **D** = **Disagree** **S.D** = **Strongly Disagree**	**S A**	**A**	**N**	**D**	**S D**
1. The administration in your building is easily approachable.					
2. I feel comfortable talking to the school building administrator(s) about concerns.					
3. I feel comfortable talking to my child's teacher(s) about concerns					
4. I think my child gets too much homework.					
5. The Superintendent is easily accessible.					
6. I feel comfortable calling the Superintendent.					
7. I feel comfortable calling members of the School Committee.					
8. My child is very happy in school.					
9. The school addresses my child's academic needs well.					
10. The school addresses my child's other needs well.					
11. Meetings with teachers give me a clear indication of my child's progress.					
12. My child's school/teacher(s) give me strategies for dealing with academic concerns.					
13. My child's school/teacher(s) give me strategies for dealing with non-academic concerns.					
14. My child is provided a physically safe environment in which to learn.					
15. My child is provided an emotionally safe environment in which to learn.					
16. I see my child's teachers as often as I need.					
17. My child has sufficient opportunities to work with technology.					
18. My child has received an excellent education.					
19. My child has reached his or her full potential.					
20. I like the way my child's teacher (primary, elementary), team (middle), or courses (high) were selected.					

II. Assessment:

21. I have a very clear understanding of my child's progress from report cards					
22. I have a very clear understanding of my child's progress from teacher conferences					
23. I have a very clear understanding of the expectations of my child from teacher conferences and parents' nights					

Include any suggestions you may have for improving your understanding of your child's progress or of the school's expectations below:

Progress: _____

_____

_____

Expectations: _____

_____

_____

III. English/Language Arts

	SA	A	N	D	SD
24. My child's experiences in reading (as understanding) have been excellent.					

Please explain your answer and give any suggestions you may have below:

_____

_____

25. My child's experiences in writing have been excellent.					

Please explain your answer and give any suggestions you may have below:

_____

_____

26. My child's experiences in speaking and discussion have been excellent.					

Please explain your answer and give any suggestions you may have below:

_____

27. My child's experiences in literature have been excellent.					

Please explain your answer and give any suggestions you may have below:

_____

_____

Please use the back of these sheets to add any comments you may have, positive or negative.

If you would be willing to participate in a short telephone interview, please print your name below:

Name _____ Telephone _____ Best time(s) _____

APPENDIX M

Analysis of High School Parent Responses

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat	Neutral	Some what	Strongly Disagree
21: Clear understanding of progress	40	43	0	7	3
22: Clear understanding through teacher conferences	13	53	13	0	10
23: Expectations through parents' nights	23	47	7	10	13
4: Too much homework	0	5	5	40	50
9: Excellent education	20	40	5	20	15
24: Excellent reading	15	50	15	15	15
25: Excellent writing	10	30	5	35	20
26: Excellent oral language	10	45	25	15	5
27: Excellent literature	25	55	5	5	10

Written responses

I have never had expectations explained to me.
My child was underchallenged.
Need more parent/teacher interaction.
Too many tests.
Use tests as guide for teaching not just ranting students.
Students need to learn from errors.

English Language Arts comments.
More writing and edition are needed.
Assignments should build to multiple and more difficult projects.
Little writing.
Poorly corrected writing.
My child does not have good writing skills: research, or critical analysis.
Too many lecture.
Underchallenged.
Lost creative writing in the high school.
Not enough homework.
Advanced Placement English is excellent.
Little vocabulary.
Specific excellent teachers.

APPENDIX N

A Matrix of the Evolution of the Assessments, Teachers' Epistemology, Assignments, and Levels of Complexity in the Humanities Class

My initial polarized view (which evolved into a continuum during the study)	**Traditional Education** (not good, too rigid) skill and drill lecture and text based teacher centered		**Learning-centered** (the right way) learning-centered students construct meaning in a safe socially interactive environment	
Stages of Knowledge Acquisition (Jonassen, 1992)	**Initial Knowledge Acquisition**		**Advanced Knowledge Acquisition**	**Expertise**
Teacher epistemology (Caine, 1997)	**Perceptual Orientation I** See knowledge as quantifiable, as an accumulation of skills		**Perceptual Orientation II** Hierarchical teaching, but emphasize ideas and concepts and facts and skills	**Perceptual Orientation III** Organization is based on making meaning and connections and focusing on critical ideas
Women's Ways of Knowing (Belenky et al., 1986)	**Received** Truth is in the authorities	**Subjective** Truth is what is felt, believed by the individual	**Procedural** Ideas are manipulated with logic, empathy, distancing	**Constructed** Connections among all authority, logic, self
Kind of Knowledge (my adaptation)	**Well-structured knowledge** • information • skills • example: Names, dates, identifying artists • reading time line	**Knowledge from self** • emotions • gut responses • preconceived attitudes • prejudices	**Ill-structured knowledge** • Reading literature • Interpretation of art, music	**Elaborate Structures** Interpretation

Teaching Strategies (my adaptation)	• direct teaching of information • lecture • workbooks • give students practice exercises • feedback through grades,	• coaching • mentoring • reflection • create a positive environment • create a challenging environment	• coaching • facilitating • mentoring • direct teaching	• structuring learning by learner
Assessment (my adaptation)	• reinforcement • testing	• reflections • conferences	• collaboration • conferences • group work	• self-evaluation • reflection which also uses analysis
What these stages look like in writing (my adaptation from Women's Ways of Knowing (1986)	Received Knowledge • Summary • External description • Quote • Accurate summary. • Objective observation. • Direct quotes (Writers' agendas or contexts are not yet analyzed.)	Subjective Knowledge (emotions, first impressions, likes, dislikes, prejudices) • Gut response • What you see as" real" sometimes before you begin to analyze. • I like/don't like I agree/disagree.. (These may be changed over time.)	Procedural Knowledge • Separate • (distancing): Analysis, logic, argument, comparison, contrast Use other information or theories to understand. • Connected • (empathetic): metaphor, imagine you are another person or in another time. Look at objective and subjective responses and analyze, compare, contrast, use metaphors	Constructed Knowledge • Your story or theory. All of the other ways of knowing are important parts of this whole. • New (your) way of putting all three of the other stages together. This kind of writing is clearly • Consciously use all of the distancing and empathizing methods listed above to put your story together
Examples	• Objective questions in	• Reflections	• Time lines/portfolios	• Arcadia writing

of Humanities assignments	unit tests • Consequential Pursuit: trivia game developed by the students	• Responses to art, music • Imagine you are a musician, talking to an alien about music	• End of unit tests with essay questions on content • Create a contemporary Everyman • Puppet shows, a group's adaptation of a play	assignment with no right answer (did not work, too soon in the year?) • Third Quarter Exam on 3 works of art, literature and music (very effective) • Self-designed project
Examples of student perceptions, or epistemologies	• Carrie saw our assignments as vague	• Dani was angry when he had to do assignments like reflecting that he could not understand	• Gwen thought she wanted independence, but wanted us to tell her the "right answers"	• Ryan and Cate enjoyed the freedom and understood the assignments from the beginning of the year • Dani found that the "truth" was not always as definitive as he had thought.

APPENDIX O

Brief Profiles of Students

Student	A Brief Profile
Scot	A "popular" senior whose project and final discussion about the Pieta showed little concern. He received a D.
Carrie	A "popular" senior who worked harder than Scot and worked with him on the Michelangelo project. She gave herself a 70.
Gwen	A junior who realizes that the class asked her to be independent, but that she had not realized or appreciated that our expectations were hers until the class was almost over. She traveled to Switzerland that summer. She received a B.
Jake	A "popular" senior who was often illogical. He received a D, but felt he deserved a B.
Mary Ellen	An unmotivated senior who became motivated by the end of the year.
Amy	A senior who worked hard on her AIDS project. She received an A.
Cate	A creative, motivated senior who thought a self designed project was a "dream." An A student.
Dani	An international student from Switzerland, who grappled with Henry VIII and Martin Luther, made some break throught, and ultimately wrote a poem and enjoyed taking risks. An A student. He did a puppet show with Ryan and Sarah.
Sally	A junior with a learning disability. She gained her voice with her discovery that Picasso was not a good man. She received her first A for the last quarter.
Ryan	A quiet senior who researched the Beat generation and wrote a "beat" song. He was an A student throughout the year, though he was frequently absent and considered unmotivated by many teachers.
Amie	A junior who had a difficult year in the course. Amie received a C.
Mark	A senior at the fringes who seems to have untapped ability. Mark received a D.
Jim	The only junior to receive a D. He researched the Ku Klux Klan.
Spencer	A junior who wrote about how he was in the Late Renaissance of his life. An A student.

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